THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

DROWNING UNDER UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES:

A

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

OF

POLICY MESS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract of Thesis

THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

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The research focused on public policy implementation, unintended consequences of government action and policy mess, using the particular example of West Lothian College's Private Finance Initiative procured Livingston campus as a case study. A public policy change led to the college becoming financially insecure, undermined the college's business case and the college's ability to meet its contractual and financial obligations. If left unresolved, the college would have run out of money, defaulted on the contract and threatened the very existence of the institution. The college estate was taken into public ownership as the result of a negotiated settlement with the private sector owners of the campus.

The importance of the research lay in adding to the body of knowledge around public policy implementation theory, which is not well researched or understood in the context of further education. The research design led to an in-depth interpretive, instrumental, single case study that explored, described and explained public policy implementation from the perspective of participants in a public policy network. The techniques of semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis were used. Using a policy networks approach, the research identified: how policy gets modified; how unintended consequences arose; how the unintended consequences resulted in policy mess; what policy learning took place as a result of policy mess; what policy change occurred as a result of policy mess; my role as an interested researcher and agent of change in the situation. In the West Lothian College case it was found that an ensemble of public policy had been at play rather than simply one policy. This ensemble of top-down policies comprised the UK-wide private finance initiative and two Scotland-wide further education funding policies.

The research was timely as the literature suggests that policy networks are increasingly identified as an important governance mechanism in the areas of public policy implementation and new public management. The findings show that in respect of the West Lothian College case, networks were present and had an impact on the policy process. Policy networks have also increased the number of policy makers and its implementers in further education in Scotland. Networks have reconfigured relationships between government and other actors. They have also linked previously separate central, vertical, policy makers with an array of horizontal policy implementation actors.

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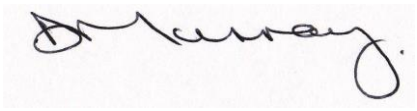
DECLARATION

This thesis has been composed by David Williamson Murray. The work is my own and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Signed: 

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My thanks go to those who matter to me and to my academic supervisor, Professor Lindsay Paterson. I am privileged to have received their unfailing support and understanding over what has been a long and challenging period in my life. I am grateful to all for never giving up on me and my endeavour. This accomplishment has helped me grow as an individual. I have scaled my pyramid, reached the summit and have a sense of self-actualisation. Something I thought to be out of reach.

ABBREVIATIONS, LIST of TABLES, FIGURES & TEXT BOXES

ABBREVIATIONS

ASC	Association of Scottish Colleges
EdD	Doctorate in Education
HBG	Hollandsche Beton Groep
HM	Her Majesty's
MP/MPs	Member(s) of Parliament
MSP/MSPs	Member(s) of the Scottish Parliament
nGMS	New General Medical Services Contract
NHS	National Health Service
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PS	Private Sector Partner Senior Executive
PSBR	Public Sector Borrowing Requirement
SBFES	Sector Body for Further Education in Scotland
SECM	Scottish Executive Cabinet Member
SESCS	Scottish Executive, Senior Civil Service Civil Servant
SOEID	Scottish Office Education and Industry Department
SOM	Scottish Office Minister
SFEFC	Scottish Further Education Funding Council
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
SUM/SUMs	Student Units of Measurement
UK	United Kingdom
WLCBG	West Lothian College Board of Governors Members
WLCBM	West Lothian College Board of Management Member
WLCSM	West Lothian College Senior Managers
WSUMS	Weighted Student Units of Measurement

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The research focused on public policy implementation, unintended consequences of government action and policy mess, using the particular example of West Lothian College's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) procured Livingston campus as a case study.

Public Policy Implementation

The literature review clearly suggests that public policy implementation is an area of concern and hence research. The importance of the research lay in adding to the body of knowledge around public policy implementation theory. The literature highlighted that much had been researched and written about organisation theory and public administration (Hargrove 1983). It also showed how the field of implementation research (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984) had developed and grown considerably over recent decades from a low starting point (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). It remains highly relevant to this day, given the shift in emphasis from 'government' to 'governance' (Rhodes 1997a, 2000, 2003) and the increasing importance of the concept of governance (Hill & Hupe 2009). That shift has seen a move away from only vertical command and control means and ends of policy steering, towards governance settings that are more horizontal or differentiated (Hill & Hupe 2009). The review also pointed to gaps in the literature. It was found that contemporary public policy implementation is not well researched or understood in the context of further education.

The literature review identified the policy process as a cycle with up to eighteen-stages of which implementation is the sixteenth (Dror 1989, pp. 163-4) and of itself considered worthy of analysis (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 7). During implementation, policy may be substantially changed, with profound implications for the substance of a policy (Anderson 1975, p. 78-9; Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 7).

The literature review identified that the application of policy network analysis was an appropriate tool to examine the West Lothian College case study and to address the research question and associated sub-questions. The literature review illustrated that contemporary policy issues are complex, with decentralisation and fragmentation of delivery, coupled with interdependence, sitting alongside the centralisation of political power by the state (Peters & Pierre 1998; Stoker 1998; Rhodes 1999). The literature suggested that this coexistence may result in the policy aspirations and intentions of government having unintended consequences (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a; Grantham 2001; Norton 2002) and that policy network analysis offers a good account of policy change (Hall 1993; Sabatier 1993). The literature review suggests that using an appropriate theoretical framework can be extremely useful in highlighting the complexity of policy decisions and their subsequent impact.

A gap in the literature was also found when it came to the writing-up of my research and in particular the important topic of 'showing the workings' (Holliday 2001, p. 47) of my research.

Area of Research

An in-depth interpretive approach was central to this research into the case of the West Lothian College PFI procured Livingston campus. Interpretivism puts people at the heart of the research process, is basically concerned with meaning and tries to understand social subjects' definition of a setting (Schwandt 1994). The study explored, described and explained public policy implementation theory from the perspective of elite participants in a public policy network or policy community. The techniques of semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis were used. The research identified:

- How policy gets modified.
- How unintended consequences arose.
- How unintended consequences resulted in policy mess.
- What policy learning took place as a result of this policy mess.
- What policy change occurred as a result of this policy mess.
- My role as an interested researcher and at that time as an agent of change in the West Lothian College case.

Interest

The research was undertaken to examine the unintended consequences of public policy implementation using the particular example of West Lothian College's PFI procured Livingston campus as a case study. West Lothian College's new Livingston campus, procured through the Private Finance Initiative, opened in July 2001. It was the first, wholly replacement, purpose-built, further education estate in the UK for over thirty years, and remains unique in that it was the only one, in

Scotland, wholly procured and operated through the PFI. In its first year of operation, a sector-wide public policy change led to the new West Lothian College becoming financially insecure due to a cap being placed on the number of funded student places in further education. Such policy change undermined the very basis of the college's PFI business case i.e. growth in centrally funded student places and hence its ability to meet contractual and financial obligations. Had the situation remained unresolved, the worst-case scenario would have seen the college simply run out of money around 2011 and default on the PFI contract. Such events might even have threatened the continued existence of the institution. The policy mess resulted in the college being unable to satisfy proven unmet demand from its communities for further and higher education - despite the college being located, designed and built for growth. It was also responsible for considerable reputational damage. In April 2007, the college estate was taken into public ownership as the result of a negotiated settlement with the private sector owners of the campus.

At the time of starting this research, I was a senior manager with 34-career years of experience gained in the further education sector in Scotland. I was a long-serving member of various West Lothian College principalships and senior management teams and had fulfilled various roles including being the Designated Depute. My active and intimate involvement in the West Lothian College case spanned some seventeen career-years. Pre-PFI, I was a senior practicing professional in further education in Scotland, holding the substantive post of Assistant Principal. This included responsibility for establishing a West Lothian College campus in Livingston. From 1993 to 2001 and in addition to my then substantive post, I was

also designated as the ‘Project Director’ for the West Lothian College Livingston Campus project and the subsequent PFI. These had simply been ‘added’ to my then senior manager post and portfolio. This enlarged role ultimately saw me project-manage the negotiation, procurement, delivery and subsequent operation of the new West Lothian College Livingston campus. From 2001, when the new campus opened and until 2008 when I left West Lothian College, my roles had included being Designated Depute and managing the college and PFI consortium interface. In my then substantive policy and planning role, I was also responsible for interpreting and implementing received policy from government and its agencies and for developing, implementing and monitoring the institution’s corporate governance policy framework and policies. I therefore had an intimate involvement with the case from blank sheet of paper to concept development, the procurement process, the construction phase, the fully operational new Livingston Campus and, ultimately, the campus transferring to public ownership.

The case was of interest as it was:

- An opportunity to add to the body of knowledge around public policy implementation theory, which is not well understood in the context of further education; particularly in Scotland.
- An opportunity to examine how public policy gets modified.
- An opportunity to examine the unintended consequences of government action.
- An example of public policy-making and implementation which straddled both the Westminster model and a devolved model of government i.e. the Scottish Parliament.
- Unique in being the first and only, wholly PFI procured further education college estate in Scotland.
- A case that offered ease of access to key elite participants, official published documents and evidence.
- An opportunity to draw from and reflect on some seventeen career-years of experience gained through my active and intimate involvement in the significant change process of the new West Lothian College.

The reasons for doing the research were:

- To explain and understand how unintended consequences came about and why.
- To explain the effect of unintended consequences.
- To examine what policy learning has emerged as a result.
- To examine what policy changes(s) arose as a result.

Research Question

The main research question addressed was:

> *How and why did the interplay of seemingly unrelated public policies result in unintended consequences in the case of West Lothian College?*

The six sub-questions addressed were:

1. *What were the intended policy goals?*
2. *How and why did the implementation of one policy impact upon the implementation of another?*
3. *What was the process by which this came about?*
4. *What part did changes in organising perspective; policy networks and actors play in the process?*
5. *What was the effect of this unintended consequence for the different actors?*
6. *What policy learning and change arose as a result?*

Aim

The aim was to present an informed analysis of how a significant sector-wide aspect of Scottish further education funding policy impacted on one actor and also add to the base of knowledge in the area of public policy implementation.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter offers a brief overview of further education in Scotland, the West Lothian economy and West Lothian College from the 1960s to 2007.

The economic context in which West Lothian College developed and operated has changed considerably since the college's beginnings in the 1960s and is important to an informed understanding of the West Lothian College case. However, it is not only the economic context that is important to such an understanding. The public policy context within which the college evolved also changed considerably. Most recently that has been influenced by the intersection and interplay of the following ensemble of public policies:

- The Private Finance Initiative.
- The competitiveness and growth policy in student activity levels for the Scottish further education sector.
- The consolidation in student activity levels and greater collaboration policy for the Scottish further education sector.

Economic Context

The account given below is based on Borrowman (2000), the West Lothian Economic Review (West Lothian Council 2002) and the West Lothian Economic Strategy (West Lothian Council 2007).

West Lothian is a diverse geographical area covering some 43sq km, made up of rural villages and urban towns, older burghs and the former New Town of Livingston, which was established in 1962. Throughout much of the immediate

post-war period the West Lothian economy was dominated by a range of traditional heavy and nationalised industries, including steel making, coal and shale mining, truck and tractor manufacturing. It was also home to some very early manufacturers of electronics such as Plessey. From the 1960s to the 1980s, West Lothian went through a period of significant economic adjustment as global and national economic changes impacted. Livingston became the catalyst for population growth and economic restructuring in the area. By the 1980s, West Lothian, like many other areas whose economy was reliant on traditional industries, experienced large-scale closures leading to an unemployment rate of 22.6% in 1982, one of the highest in Britain. In parallel with these changes to traditional industries and in the structure of traditional employment, West Lothian saw the rise in the 1980s and early '90s of the so-called "sunrise" industries of electronics and semi-conductors. Many global corporations, mainly from the USA and Japan located in West Lothian and Livingston, the so-called 'capital' of "Silicon Glen" (Borrowman 2000, p. 150), attracted by government funded location packages and an available workforce. By 1998, West Lothian's economy had improved considerably. However, this was to be short-lived. By 2001, a global downturn in electronics and semi-conductor manufacturing resulted in the closure of the Motorola mobile phone plant, quickly followed by that of NEC Semiconductors. In total some 10,000 jobs were lost to the local economy through such events and their knock-on effects. While 2001 brought an economic downturn to West Lothian, the resilience of the local economy was such that an adaptable economy and workforce absorbed its impact. Over the last forty years, West Lothian has experienced sustained population and housing growth and this trend is expected to continue to 2020. Recent statistics indicate a rapidly

growing population of 162,840 that is younger than the Scottish average, has an increasing number of older people and is projected to reach 183,600 by 2018. The local economy has also become more diverse and focused on developing and attracting knowledge-based services to generate highly skilled jobs. This brought the lowest unemployment rate (2%) in West Lothian for 25 years and the highest economic rates in Scotland. By 2007, the profile of the local economy was made up of some 4,400 businesses, employing 67,400 people across the following seven key sectors:

- High Technology and Biotechnology.
- Computers and Electronics.
- Distribution and Logistics.
- Business, Customer and Financial Services (including Contact Centres).
- Manufacturing.
- Retail.
- Food and Drink.

As for the former new town of Livingston, that came to be described as 'West Lothian's capital' (Borrowman 2000, p. 172).

Policy Context

The account given below is principally based on Butt (2000). Policy-making and implementation regarding further education in Scotland between the 1960s and 2007, has been broadly shaped by two different political systems i.e. the Westminster model (Gamble 1990) and the differentiated polity (Rhodes 1997a) model of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive. The Westminster model saw a form of administrative devolution exercised by the Scottish Office and resulted in a

considerable degree of Scottish autonomy for civil servants (Paterson 2000). These arrangements changed in 1999 with the establishment of the differentiated polity model (Rhodes 1997a, 2000; Holliday 2000) of the Scottish Parliament that had a range of devolved powers, including education and training (Finlay 2007). As a consequence, policies, networks, interests, membership, interdependence, resources, goals and outputs experienced significant change. Given that the policies concerned were developed through two different political systems, the policies cited are also examples of policy convergence and policy divergence (Keating 2005), which is discussed more fully in the literature review.

West Lothian College was established in 1964 as the 'Bathgate Technical College' by the former West Lothian County Council and was officially opened in October 1965. Located in the town of Bathgate in the then densely industrialised central belt of Scotland between Glasgow and Edinburgh, its purpose was to serve the training needs of the local economy. Technical education in Scotland experienced a significant expansion, particularly in the 1960s to the 1970s. This was the result of a new *Code for Further Education* produced in 1952, which led to two White Papers. The first, in 1956, *The Future of Technical Education in Scotland*, brought about substantial capital investment in further education facilities. The second, in 1961, led to a strategy for the expansion of further education allied to the needs of the economy. Between 1957 and 1972, 30 new colleges, including the Bathgate Technical College, were built. At the same time there was a rapid rise in the number of student enrolments to 337,000, nearly doubling the enrolments of 1913-14. Apprenticeships were a route into employment for many and study at the technical

college was often an integral part of such training. The Bathgate Technical College provided vocational, and pre-vocational, education and training up to Higher National Certificate level for full-time, part-time, day release and evening students from West Lothian and surrounding areas. In 1972, the Midlothian County Council, within whose boundaries the new town of Livingston fell, 'postponed plans for a technical college' (Borrowman 2000, p. 95), as Livingston had not achieved the size of population estimated for it. In 1975 what had been the 'Bathgate Technical College' was renamed 'West Lothian College', as a result of local government reorganisation (Improvement Service 2007). Control of the West Lothian College now fell under the newly created Lothian Regional Council. West Lothian College's role was expanded under the regional council to include further education as well as continuing with the range of vocational technical education it had previously offered.

The 1980s saw a shift from craft and pre-apprenticeship technical education provision. Business, electronics and computing began to feature in the provision of colleges. Throughout the 1980's West Lothian College had sought to establish a significant presence in Livingston (PFI Scotland 2000). However, this had amounted to no more than a series of small-scale annexes scattered throughout the new town. By 1989, West Lothian College had secured a commitment from the then Lothian Regional Council to build a college annexe on a significant scale in Livingston (PFI Scotland 2000). Such plans progressed to the tender stage. However they were thwarted by a process, known as 'incorporation' that led to 42 (Audit Scotland 2003) colleges being removed from local authority control and being established as independent bodies with their own boards of management who were given

responsibility for the assets, budget, staff and management of their colleges. For West Lothian College, an immediate consequence of this was that the funding, which had been allocated by central government to the Lothian Regional Council for the West Lothian College Livingston Campus project, was instead diverted in 1992 by the council to build a denominational secondary school in Livingston. By that time West Lothian College was now facing significant challenges as its estate was in a parlous state and it was geographically distant from Livingston (PFI Scotland 2000), which was to become the economic heart of the area. By 1996, the college's market share of centrally funded grant-in-aid was declining due to below average growth in funded student places, known as student units of measurement (SUMs).

As Table 1 shows, West Lothian College was significantly underperforming at a time when it should have been growing and maximising its share of unfettered growth in the number of centrally funded student places.

1995/96 Actual SUMs 25,563	1996/97 Estimated SUMs 26,669	1997/98 Forecast SUMs 27,456
Actual Grant in Aid 1995/96 £4.825 m	Estimated % Decrease in Grant-in-Aid -5%	Estimated % Decrease in Grant-in-Aid -6%

Table 1
Livingston New Build Campus
PFI Project Final Business Case, Appendix D1
West Lothian College, 1997

That underperformance had also been identified in an inspection report by HM Inspectors of Schools, which noted that the college's budget in 1997-98 was 'significantly below the average for the sector' (HM Inspectors of Schools 1999).

The Conservative Government of the 1990s implemented the *Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992*. Passed by the Westminster Parliament (Scottish Parliament 1999), this introduced market reforms (Denham 2002) that resulted in 42 (Audit Scotland 2003) of Scotland's further education colleges being removed, in 1993, from local authority control. The colleges were given autonomy and made accountable, as incorporated bodies, to the Secretary of State for Scotland (Scottish Parliament 1999). As part of that new autonomous world, colleges and the Scottish Office now had a direct relationship with each other, particularly through the funding of colleges, which previously had been through 12 regional and island local authorities. The result was to put the Scottish Office in a position of power as it controlled the resources in the form of central government funding. The requirement by the Westminster government on all parties was the provision of effective and efficient further education within tight spending limits.

The Private Finance Initiative was announced in 1992 by the then Conservative Government (Ghobadian *et al* 2004; Greenaway *et al* 2004). The PFI was introduced at a time of public sector spending restraint as government sought to reduce the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR). It was one of many United Kingdom-wide policies whose aim was to increase private sector delivery in the provision of public services and infrastructure. A fundamental intent of the PFI was the optimal transfer of risk(s) from the public to the private sector (Ghobadian *et al* 2004; Greenaway *et al* 2004). Central to this notion of optimisation was that the party i.e. private or public that could best manage the risk identified with a particular project e.g. demand risk, construction price risk, should have it allocated to them.

Where it was considered that the private sector would be less able to manage the risk e.g. demand, such as number of students, then the risk remained with the public sector. That was what happened in the case of West Lothian College. In practice, the PFI has seen an increased number of public sector capital projects in relation to a particular level of public expenditure and has resulted in projects being realised earlier that might otherwise have been the case (Ghobadian *et al* 2004; Greenaway *et al* 2004). From 1992 through to 1997, West Lothian College worked with the Scottish Office and the then Conservative Government to find a solution to the establishment of a West Lothian College in Livingston (PFI Scotland 2000). However, the capital required could not be found within the block grant of the then government's spending plans. In September 1997, the newly formed Labour Government gave its consent to the procurement of a new West Lothian College through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI Scotland 2000). However, this required that West Lothian College move from its existing campus in Bathgate to a new, purpose-built campus in Livingston. In December 1999, the then Board of Management of West Lothian College signed a 25-year PFI contract for the design, build, finance and operation of a new replacement campus to be located in Livingston (PFI Scotland 2000). This was the same year that devolution in Scotland had introduced a new political system. As a result of devolution, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive, as Scotland's government, took on devolved powers for certain matters, including further education and, as a consequence, an inherited commitment to financially support the West Lothian College PFI contract. Work on the new, replacement campus commenced in January 2000 (Scottish

Executive 2000) and it was opened in July 2001 (PFI Scotland 2000) on time and to budget.

From 1993 to 1999, the funding policy implemented by the Scottish Office for Scotland's colleges was one of competitiveness and growth between institutions. The policy utilised a zero-sum-game distribution formula based on the 'Student Unit of Measurement' (SUM) that distributed a share of the grant total to each college. The amount of central funding, known as 'grant-in-aid' (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 2), that an individual institution secured was based on the number of SUMs it generated in the previous full academic year, with each SUM 'equated to forty hours of student study time' (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5). The intention of the policy was to 'reward efficiency and quality of provision' (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5) through competition between colleges for students. The more students an institution recruited, the greater was its share of the central, fixed, funding pot and vice versa. The SUMs achieved were submitted to the then Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID) and they determined a college's allocation for the next financial year. As an example, the funding for 1996-97 was based on the total SUM activity in 1995-96. However, with the overall further education budget having grown only marginally during the mid-1990s, a college had to achieve an above average increase in SUMs to receive any increased allocation (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5). For example, in 1996-7 colleges were required to achieve growth of 10% in the previous year, simply to retain the same level of grant in the next year in cash terms (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5). In effect, the formula penalised those institutions, like West Lothian College, that had below average growth and rewarded

those that achieved growth above the sector average. A consequence of the implementation of this particular policy was considerable financial instability in the sector (Scottish Parliament 2002), with two thirds of the sector's funding eventually coming from unpredictable, central grant-in-aid (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5).

The period 1999 to 2002 saw a change in funding policy for further education (Scottish Parliament 2002). The 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review resulted in the implementation of growth in the overall quantum of centrally funded SUMs over the period 1999-2000 to 2001-02 (Scottish Parliament 2002). An increase of 40,000 in the number of college students was planned for the end of the spending review period in 2001-02 (Scottish Parliament 2002). However, whilst there was growth in the overall size of the funding pot, the overall goal of the funding policy remained unchanged (Scottish Parliament 2002).

In 2002, and just months after the new West Lothian College opened, the Scottish Executive determined that, for affordability reasons, the competitiveness and growth funding policy in further education was to be replaced by one of consolidation in student activity levels and greater collaboration between colleges (Scottish Parliament 2002). This policy put an end to growth in the number of centrally funded student numbers, introduced a cap on the number of SUMs available across the sector and brought individual funding agreements between each college and the then Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC), the body responsible for the distribution of funding (Scottish Parliament 2002). The aim of the policy was to bring about a sector-wide improvement in the poor financial health (Scottish Parliament 2002) and stability of colleges, which had arisen from post-incorporation

competition between institutions and long-term under-funding (Scottish Parliament 2005b). However, it was to have the opposite effect for West Lothian College, its 25-year PFI contract (Scottish Parliament 2005b) and the agreed business case assumptions (Scottish Parliament 2005a). Just at a time when West Lothian College was positioned and located for growth, the very means by which it could have achieved that objective was removed.

The PFI contract had been negotiated before the SFEFC was established. The Scottish Office, which had been responsible for the provision of further education at that time, approved the contract. The financial business case for the PFI contract had been based on assumptions about funded growth in student activity (Scottish Parliament 2005c). However, the Scottish Executive policy change in 2002 meant that West Lothian College was not funded to support the increased number of students assumed as part of the PFI contract (Scottish Parliament 2005c). The SFEFC was committed to providing a total of £42 million over 25 years to support West Lothian College's contributions to the PFI contract payments (Scottish Parliament 2005c). However, the annual level of support from the SFEFC was to reduce significantly from 2007. This would have resulted in an £11 million funding gap over the next 20 years (Scottish Parliament 2005c). These financial difficulties also attracted negative press coverage (Edinburgh Evening News 2006; The Scotsman 2007), which the college sought to counter through a steady stream of good news stories. Faced with an £11m shortfall in relation to the PFI payments over the remaining term of the PFI contract, West Lothian College was summoned to appear before the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee in June 2005 as a result of a

Section 22 Report (Scottish Parliament 2005a) by the Auditor General for Scotland. The evidence (Scottish Parliament 2005b) submitted to the committee highlighted some of the difficulties that can arise in the implementation stage of the policy cycle (Scottish Parliament 2005c). Subsequently, in its findings, the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee emphasised the need for government to be clear about the financial impact that sectoral level policy changes can have at the level of individual colleges (Scottish Parliament 2005c) and similarly that any solution might have a sector-wide impact. It also identified that the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), which had replaced the SFEFC, had already learned that a capital development on West Lothian College's scale would not now be suitable for PFI (Scottish Parliament 2005c). A subsequent report, *PFI/ PPP and Capital Procurement in the Scottish Further and Higher Education Sectors* (Scottish Funding Council 2006), confirmed this position and underscored many of the issues that had beset West Lothian College and its PFI procured campus. In December 2006, the then Scottish Executive announced that the PFI contract was to be reviewed by the Scottish Funding Council 'to ensure the most efficient and effective use of public money' (Scottish Executive 2006). To properly inform that review, the SFC had commissioned a financial analysis of the options available to the college. The options considered were:

- Continuing with the PFI provider.
- Prepayment of the unitary charge (with flexibility).
- Termination.

Initial analysis showed that the termination option was the one that offered best value for money and Scottish ministers directed the SFC to ensure that the termination option did indeed offer the best value for public money. Following negotiations

involving Partnerships UK with the PFI provider, the initial analysis was re-run, this time using the final termination cost as shown in Table 2. This concluded that termination was indeed the best option, in the long term, in terms of value for money for the public purse.

Cost of Termination	**£000s**
Total cost – payment to PFI provider	27,700
Value of assets transferred	(18,158)
Revenue cost before release of grant	9,542
SFC grant released to income	(4,002)
Net revenue cost of termination	**5,540**

Table 2: Cost of Termination
(Scott-Moncrieff 2008)

On April 2, 2007, it was announced that, as the result of a voluntary termination of the college's PFI contract, West Lothian College had returned to public ownership and that the Livingston Campus would now be owned, managed and operated by West Lothian College. This put it on the same basis as any other college in Scotland regarding its main campus estate. Subsequently, West Lothian College's auditors, Scott-Moncrieff offered the opinion that the review process followed had been appropriate and adequate to ensure that the transaction had offered the best value for public money (Scott-Moncrieff 2008). As to the cost of termination, West Lothian College paid £27.7 million to the PFI provider as shown in Table 2 (Scott-Moncrieff 2008). This included the land and buildings of the Livingston campus, which passed to West Lothian College as part of the termination agreement. These were subsequently valued at £18.158 million. As part of the PFI termination, the ownership of the campus land, buildings, fixtures and fittings transferred to West Lothian College. The cost of termination had to be funded but was clearly beyond

the resources of West Lothian College. To facilitate this, the SFC awarded West Lothian College a capital grant of £22.16 million, plus a repayable advance of £5.54 million to fund the termination payment. This was accounted for as shown in Table 3 (Scott-Moncrieff 2008).

SFC funding for PFI termination	**£000s**	**£000s**
Deferred capital grants	18,158	
SFC grant released in year	4,002	
Total SFC grant		22,160
SFC loan		5,540
TOTAL		**27,700**

Table 3: SFC funding for PFI termination
(Scott-Moncrieff 2008)

West Lothian College's financial statements show that it incurred a deficit of £5,200,000 for the year 2006-2007, due to the revenue impact of the early termination of the PFI contract (Scott-Moncrieff 2008).

Conclusion

The account given above of the case's context made this an interesting phenomenon to study for a number of reasons. To begin with, the study encompassed contemporary public policy implementation theory in the context of further education in Scotland. This is an area in which there are gaps in the literature. The case was also unique in that there was no other example of it in Scotland. A significant point of interest was the complexity of the case in that it had included an ensemble of seemingly unrelated public policies that had interplayed with each other, had been modified and had involved an array of different actors, all with different agendas, power and resources. I wanted to understand and explain the dynamic of that interplay, which saw the implementation of one policy impact upon another and

have significant and unintended consequences, particularly for one actor; the West Lothian College. Other points of interest were how reforms in the relationship between the further education sector and government and a devolved model of government had played out in this case. Of significant interest was the possibility of hearing the accounts of organisational and political elites who had been involved in the case. I was also interested to know if, as a result of these events, anything had been learned that might better inform future policy implementation. Finally, I was interested to explore how, through a study of the phenomenon, I could contribute to an explanation of it by drawing upon my own intimate involvement with the case. In order to thoroughly explore and adequately explain these points of interest, I wanted to get under the superficialities of the case and avoid it being seen as a simple account of an unremarkable, under-performing, post-incorporation college. To that end, I considered it important to frame 'how?', 'what?' and 'why?' research questions, as shown in the Introduction Chapter, and I wanted to put these to selected political and organisational elites who had an intimate involvement with the case. The intent was that such questions would allow me to fully explore the phenomenon that was the West Lothian College case and enable me to reveal and collect rich data of the kind shown in the Research Methodology Chapter that otherwise might never be known. I believed that this would enable me to offer-up an informed and plausible explanation of this complex case as shown in the Findings Chapter.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The aim of the literature review is to outline and explore key concepts from the research literature on public policy implementation to better focus the exploration of and proposed research in to the West Lothian College case, inform the development of appropriate research questions, design, methodology and subsequent data collection methods. The thematic literature search drew upon a wide yet relevant range of scholarly work that included the seminal and contemporary. The literature search strategy, detailed in Appendix 1, was initially informed by reading the recommended texts from the 'Public Policy' strand of the EdD programme. This provided useful signposts to guide a wider search of the literature and to inform what not to include. The literature was then sifted for respected discourse and relevant theory guided by the scope of the literature search. The search strategy was an iterative process in which literature was added or discarded and the scope of the review refined as a result. Further refinement of the search strategy arose through discussions of the literature search with my EdD Supervisor. The review exposed me to a useful range of literature about public policy implementation theory.

Implementation

Implementation research is about 'what happened' and not 'what should have happened' and is not an easy concept to define (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). Implementation can be interpreted as:

- A noun, i.e. having achieved the policy goals.
- A verb, i.e. the process that happens in trying to achieve the policy objective.

The focus here is on implementation the verb. The review identified that public policy implementation takes different shapes and forms due, for example, to different institutional settings (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 1). Further, the literature regards these different shapes and forms of particular importance at a time when the processes of 'government' are considered to have been transformed into the processes of 'governance' (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 1). While explored in more detail later in this review, governance is taken here to point to the involvement of an increased range and mix of actors in policy implementation, when compared with hierarchical implementation structures (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 1). The linking of public policy implementation and governance is a central element in the approach taken to this research. The review identified that the field of public policy implementation research (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984) had grown and developed considerably since the 1970s (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 13), when Pressman and Wildavsky highlighted policy implementation as a matter of concern in their seminal work of 1973 (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973). It continues to be seen in that light by many writers (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). Despite researching a wide range of literature, it appears that, as yet, there is no universally agreed definition of the term 'policy implementation' and of those that do exist they range from the simple to the more elaborate. Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) viewed implementation in terms of a relationship to policy as set out in official decisions and documents and defining implementation as 'the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results' (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973 p. xv). From that perspective, implementation is viewed as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and the actions of actors aimed at the achievement of the objectives

contained in the policy decisions (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975, p. 448) explain that '… the study of implementation examines those factors that contribute to the realisation or non-realisation of policy objectives'. deLeon (1999, p. 330) states simply that implementation is 'little more than a comparison of the expected versus the achieved'. A more elaborate and respected (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009) definition by Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983, pp. 20-21) states that:

> Implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which can also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions. Ideally, that decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued, and in a variety of ways, 'structures' the implementation process. The process normally runs through a number of stages beginning with passage of the basic statute, followed by the policy outputs (decisions) of the implementing agencies, the compliance of target groups with those decisions, the actual impacts - both intended and unintended – of those outputs, the perceived impacts of agency decisions, and finally, important revisions (or attempted revisions) in the basic statute.

From that perspective, the starting point is the authoritative decision. Further, it implies the involvement of appropriately placed actors such as politicians and bureaucrats to bring about the actions aimed at the achievement of the objectives contained in the policy decisions (deLeon 1999).

Policy

The review shows that there is no one accepted definition of what is meant by the terms 'policy' or 'public policy'. Hogwood and Gunn' (1984, pp. 13-19) usefully observe that several uses of the word 'policy' are employed and categorise it as:

- A label for a field of activity.
- An expression of general purpose or desired state of affairs.
- Specific proposals.

- Decisions of government.
- Formal authorisation.
- A programme.
- Output.
- Outcome.
- Theory or model.
- Process.

(Adapted from Hogwood & Gunn 1984, pp. 13-19)

Policy Cycle

When some writers think of the policy process, the notion of a ‘stage’ or ‘phase’ is cited. These are set in the wider context of the policy process as a cycle. One identifies ‘executing the policy’ as sixteenth in an eighteen-stage cycle (Dror 1989, pp. 163-4). This sees formation and implementation as distinct parts of the policy cycle in which implementation occurs at a very late stage in that process. In this stagist view implementation is influenced by what has happened in the preceding stages and is considered worthy of analysis as a separate stage. Policy ‘may be substantially modified, elaborated or even negated during the implementation stage’ (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 7). ‘System feedback’ (Birkland 2005, p. 224-227) is also is an important part of the policy-making process. It is the information that re-enters the system, informs the next round of policy-making and closes the loop of the policy-making process (Birkland 2005, pp. 224-227). During implementation, feedback may alert policy-makers to the impact of policy and lead them to amend policy (O’Toole 2000). The result is that the boundary between policy formation and implementation can become quite blurred (O’Toole 2000).

Unintended Consequences

'Unintended consequences' (Hennessy 1992, p.453), equated with 'policy mess' (Rhodes 1997a, p. 13) holds that the actions of government always have effects that are unanticipated or unintended and that they can be negative or positive (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a; Grantham 2001; Norton 2002). Merton (1936) identified five sources of unanticipated consequences, the first two and most widespread of which are ignorance and error. For Rhodes (2005, p. 4) a shift from government to governance, from Westminster to a differentiated polity model, discussed in more detail later, is responsible for much of the 'unintended consequences that dog government policy' (Rhodes 2005, p. 4). For Rhodes (2005, p. 5) governments attach little importance to unintended consequences. Contemporary examples are 'free' personal care to older people through the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002, where care homes overcharge self-funding residents to make up a shortfall in funding for those who are not self-funding (Cairney 2007). Another is modernising the National Health Service (NHS) and the new General Medical Services (nGMS) contract. This saw crowding out of diseases that are not incentivised, tunnel vision and inefficiency and adverse consequences for patients and medical professionals (McGregor & Campbell 2006).

Policy Interaction/Interplay & Causal Relationships

Policies interact/interplay when decisions made under one policy, affect the effectiveness of another policy (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184). Policy interaction is defined as 'a causal relationship between two policies in which one policy exerts influence on the other either intentionally or unintentionally' (Oberthür & Gehring 2006 in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184). Interaction can exist at

either horizontal or vertical dimensions (Young 2002, in Urwin & Jordan 2008, p. 182). Horizontal interaction is the interplay between policies at the same level of governance, e.g. national or regional, while vertical interaction occurs between policies at different spatial scales of governance, e.g. macro, meso, micro levels (Young 2002, in Urwin & Jordan 2008, p. 182). Policy interaction or interplay can take various forms. Two are relevant to this study. The first is negative interaction, where one policy constrains the effectiveness of another policy to achieve its objectives (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184). The second interaction is positive interplay, where one policy supports measures originating from another policy (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184). What one makes of the interplay between different policies is contingent upon the standpoint taken i.e. the top-down, policy-makers perspective or the bottom-up policy-implementers perspective (Urwin & Jordan 2008, p. 181).

Evolution & Critical Understanding of Policy Implementation Theories

Implementation research (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984) grew and developed considerably from a low starting point in the 1970s (Hill & Hupe 2002) following concerns about implementation failure. Three generations of implementation research are identified in the literature (Goggin *et al* 1990). The first in the 1970s and 1980s assumed implementation would happen once a policy had been authoritatively announced by government. However, pioneering studies showed that implementation lagged behind policy expectations. These showed how a single authoritative decision was carried out and came to very pessimistic conclusions about the ability of governments to effectively implement their programmes (Pressman &

Wildavsky 1973). Theory-building was not central to this first generation of studies (Hill & Hupe 2002).

The second generation of implementation research took place between the 1980s and the 1990s and saw contributions from European scholars (Hill & Hupe 2002). It challenged the assumptions of the first generation, sought to explain cases of implementation failure and demonstrate that policy implementation was a political process that is no less complex than the formulation of policy. They unpacked the implementation process (McLaughlin 1987) by describing and analysing the relationships between policy and practice (McLaughlin 1987) and were more analytical and comparative. They engaged in theory-building and the development of numerous analytical models and frameworks (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1976; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979, 1980). This was to identify factors that contributed to the realisation or not of policy objectives and explain variations in implementation success across programmes and government (Goggin *et al* 1990). Early studies saw the development of a top-down approach to implementation.

During this second generation period, two competing schools of thought developed around how implementation should be studied and described. Because of their contrasting research strategies, these came to be known as the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' (Hill & Hupe 2002) approaches. Top-down theorists (e.g. Van Meter & Van Horn 1975; Sabatier & Mazmanian 1979, 1980) saw implementation as being about centrally made, unequivocal policy objectives channelled down to the 'bottom' through a hierarchical structure that controlled implementation. The alternative

second generation bottom-up approach was very different in its orientation and had emerged in response to perceived weaknesses in the top-down perspective (Goggin *et al* 1990). Bottom-up theorists (e.g. Lipsky 1980; Elmore 1980; Hjern & Hull 1982) saw implementation as being about the day-to-day problem-solving strategies of local street-level public service workers and negotiation processes within and between networks of policy implementers. Matland (1995), in summarising critiques of both, identifies top-down as lacking specificity regarding sub-regional contexts, while bottom-up is seen as failing to recognise centralised policy control and so narrowly focused as to render generalisation virtually impossible.

While top-down and bottom-up approaches were helpful in drawing attention to the implementation process, there were divergent views between the two, with each disregarding how the other views implementation (e.g. Goggin *et al* 1990; Hill & Hupe 2002). To move beyond top-down and bottom-up approaches and avoid the weaknesses of each (Pülzl & Treib 2007), attempts were made to reconcile the two approaches by integrating insights from them into contingency-based models (e.g. Goggin *et al* 1990; Matland 1995). Scholars involved in these attempts were labelled 'synthesizers' or 'third generation' (Hill & Hupe 2002). The third or analytical generation of implementation research has been less concerned with implementation failure and more concerned about understanding how implementation works in general (Goggin *et al* 1990). It also sought to be more scientific in how implementation is researched (Goggin *et al* 1990). It concentrated on linking the macro-level variables of the top-down approach, with the micro-level variables of the bottom-up approach (Matland 1995) by synthesising them into hybrid (Pülzl & Treib

2007) or interactional (Hall 2009) models to examine the complex process of negotiation and bargaining between actors in the policy process (e.g. Barrett & Fudge 1981; O'Toole 2000; Pülzl & Treib 2007). However, few studies are regarded as having gone in that direction (e.g. deLeon 1999; O'Toole 2000). Models from this period included forward and backward mapping (Elmore 1982), advocacy coalitions (e.g. Sabatier & Pelkey 1987; Sabatier 1988; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999), the communications model (Goggin et al. 1990) and the ambiguity/conflict model of implementation (Matland 1995). Synthesis highlighted the connection between governance and implementation, giving more attention to the role of inter-governmental relations, the political context and conflict (O'Toole 2000). The third generation has been enormously influential regarding the development of notions of governance as a way of describing how policies are steered through political actor networks (Hall 2009). The third generation has also increasingly focused on policy design and policy networks (Denhardt & Denhardt 2011). Third generation implementation research did not help the advancement of implementation research (e.g. O'Toole 2000; Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). Rather, it compounded the problem by creating a larger number of variables in overambitious research designs that saw little uptake (e.g. O'Toole 2000; Hill & Hupe 2002). Table 4 summarises, compares and contrasts the three approaches.

	Top-down Models	Bottom-up Models	Synthesisers/Third Generation Models
Dominant theme	Hierarchy, control, compliance.	Complexity, local autonomy, devolved power.	Networks, multi-level governance, steering, bargaining, exchange and negotiation.
Broad aim	To improve performance (achieve the top's goals).	To explain what actually happens as policies are implemented.	To explain how policy is the product of negotiation and bargaining between interests; To understand the nature of contemporary governance; To relate implementation to the wider social and political structure as a result of stressing the significance of the relationship between policy content and policy context.
Standpoint	Top: policy makers; legislators; central government.	Bottom: implementers, 'street level bureaucrats' and local officials.	Where negotiation and bargaining take place.
Underlying model of democracy	Elitist.	Participatory.	Where negotiation and bargaining take place.
Immediate focus	Effectiveness. To what extent are policy goals actually met?	What realistically influences action in an issue area?	Bargained interplay between goals set centrally and actor (often local) innovations/constraints.
Breadth of focus	Relatively narrow. Concentrates on a single statute policy area and those mentioned in the statute.	Broad: starts with a policy problem and examines the actors and processes which cluster around it.	Fairly broad. Analyses the coalition of interests that come together to bargain over policy and its direction.
View of other actors	Passive agents or potential impediments.	Potentially policy innovators or problem shooters.	Tries to account for the behaviour of all those who interact in the implementation of policy.
Policy formulation / implementation	Actually and conceptually distinct. Policy is made by the top and implemented by the bottom.	Blurred distinction. Policy is often made and then re-made by local officials.	Policy-action continuum. Policy seen as a series of intentions around which bargaining takes place.
View of policy	Policy is an independent variable, a starting point and a benchmark.	Policy is dependent upon the interaction between actors at the local level.	Policy is dependent upon a process of bargaining.
Administrative discretion	Can and should be controlled by sanctions and incentives (discretion creates policy 'drift' and failure).	Cannot or should not be controlled. It helps to get things done when objectives are complex and problems uncertain and changing.	Generally good. It helps to get things done when objectives are complex, and problems uncertain and changing.

Table 4: Top-down, Bottom-up & Synthesisers/Third Generation Models Compared (Adapted from Hall 2009, pp. 235-245)

	Top-down Models	Bottom-up Models	Synthesisers/Third Generation Models
Criterion of success	When outputs\ outcomes are consistent with *a priori* objectives.	Achievement of local goals.	Difficult to assess objectively.
Implementation deficits	Occur when outputs\ outcomes fall short of *a priori* objectives.	Inevitable. 'Deficits' are a sign of policy change, not failure.	All policies are modified as a result of negotiation. There is no benchmark.
Cause of implementation deficits	Good ideas poorly executed.	Not applicable. But bad ideas faithfully executed.	Deficits' are inevitable as abstract policy ideas are made more concrete.
Solution to implementation deficits	Simplify the implementation structure; apply Inducements\ sanctions, etc.	Impossible (?): 'deficits' are inevitable.	'Deficits' are inevitable.
Policy outputs and outcomes	Fairly predictable if the implementation process is properly structured.	Fairly unpredictable. Depends on local interaction.	Fairly unpredictable. Depends on bargaining.
Research methodology	Deductive: starts with a model of what should happen then compares it with reality.	Essentially inductive: starts with empirical observations of what actually happens then aggregates these in to single observations and theories.	Deductive \ inductive.
Normative Assumptions	Policy is made at the top of a hierarchy by democratically elected politicians and compliantly implemented by those at the bottom.	Policy is not made at the top of a hierarchy. It is made through the day-to-day practices of unelected street-level bureaucrats.	Policy-making and implementation are the result of a process of interaction, resource exchange and bargaining between actors.

Table 4 (continued): Top-down, Bottom-up & Synthesisers/Third Generation Models Compared (Adapted from Hall 2009, pp. 235-245)

Issues of Implementation Theories

This section briefly discusses specific issues in relation to implementation theories. They concern the lack of a concrete theory of implementation, disagreement over the definition of the term 'implementation', whether implementation is about achieving conformance or performance and methodology. After some four decades of implementation research, this review of the literature suggests that the field of policy implementation has not yet reached conceptual clarity and that the development of an all-encompassing, consensual, coherent, concrete theoretical framework for understanding and studying policy implementation that reflects the complexity of the policy process, remains elusive (O'Toole 2000; deLeon & deLeon 2002; Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). Schofield (2004) observes that of the models which have been developed, none 'have dealt with the messiness, ambiguity and complexity of implementation' (Schofield 2004, p. 286). For Saetren (2005, p. 573) 'We are not even close to a well-developed theory of policy implementation'. Even the notion of developing one all-encompassing theory of implementation, has, according to Nilsen *et al* (2013, p. 5) increasingly been questioned by researchers such as O'Toole 2006, Sabatier 2007, Hill 2009 and Winter 2012. Winter (2012) proposes that implementation research be moved forward through accepting diversity in theoretical perspectives and methodologies and not by seeking one 'common theoretical framework' (Winter 2102, p. 265). Winter (2012, p. 271) goes on to observe that many of the theoretical frameworks contained in the implementation literature are loosely developed and 'lack adequate definitions of concepts and specification of causal mechanisms'. With specific reference to the term 'implementation' there is disagreement over its definition and therefore a need for clarification (Winter 2012,

p. 271). The literature shows that implementation is used to portray either the process of implementation or the output of the implementation process and also sometimes the outcome of the implementation process (Winter 2012). As stated at the start of this chapter, the focus of this research was the *process* of implementation. When implementation is portrayed as a policy output it generally refers to the actions taken in pursuance of a policy decision (Birkland 2011, p.229). Outputs are generally easy to understand conceptually and as an actual thing (Birkland 2011, p.229). Examples include laws, regulations, rules or administrative decisions to address a problem (Birkland 2011, p.229). One example of a policy output would be a decision to fund a larger number of further education student places. When implementation is portrayed as a policy outcome it generally refers to the substantive result of implementing a policy and the societal consequences or impact following its implementation (Birkland 2011, p.229). Outcomes can be intended or unintended, positive or negative (Birkland 2011, p.229). An example of a comparable outcome of the above policy output would be, it is hoped, an increase in educational attainment. Clarifying whether implementation is about achieving conformance or performance is also necessary. Barrett and Fudge (1981) provide a useful distinction between the two. As this review of the literature has shown, top-down approaches to policy implementation focus on trying to ensure conformance with clearly stated policy objectives. So, if implementation is about 'putting policy into effect' (Barrett & Fudge 1981, p. 21) and taking action that is in conformance with the policy, then any compromise may be seen as policy failure. In contrast, bottom-up approaches focus on more practical notions of policy performance. So, from this viewpoint, if implementation is about performance and 'getting something done' (Barrett & Fudge

1981, p. 21), then performance becomes most important and compromises are made. It is evident that policy implementation can be studied from a variety of different perspectives using quite different theoretical approaches. What is not evident is that any one approach is better than the other two, Each attempts to explain different things, embraces different normative assumptions about where policy is or should be made and how policy 'failure' or 'deficit' should be interpreted. The most fundamental difference between the three approaches is the way they view the relationship between the centre, which wants something done and the local level whose compliance or agreement is needed if action is to take place. For Jordan (1995) that relationship can be characterised as one of 'command' (top-down approach), 'communion' (the bottom-up approach) or 'exchange' (bargaining and negotiation). The relationship depends on power and the interests of the policy actors involved. Network models seek to contextualise the bargaining and resource exchange relationships between actors in a specific policy area (Jordan 1995). Review of methodological issues employed by implementation studies showed that while both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies have been used, many have applied qualitative case studies, with early implementation studies dominated by single case studies that examined the complexities of implementation in a broad context (O'Toole 2000; Winter 2006). Data sources have included official documents and reports, interviews with policy actors, quantitative data on client participation, outputs and performance (Yin 1982). Third generation studies have promoted multiple, comparative, statistical and more longitudinal case studies to increase the number of observations (Goggin *et al* 1990), but few have achieved this (O'Toole 2000).

Governance

Through the lens of a differentiated polity model (Rhodes 1997a), it is claimed there has been a shift from government, i.e. the formal institutions of government, to governance, i.e. a focus on wider processes. Established hierarchical models of implementation are seen to have been abandoned as a wider range of actors participate in implementation (Hill & Hupe 2009). There has been a shift from vertical command and control means and ends of policy steering, towards governance settings that are more horizontal or differentiated (Hill & Hupe 2009). In these settings, power is increasingly shared and central government has become increasingly dependent on these wider processes to effect policy implementation and service delivery (Marinetto 2003). Instead of concentrating too narrowly on implementation, a more comprehensive approach is to consider how systems of governance deliver policy relevant impacts (O'Toole 2000). While government has always depended on other actors in the policy process; especially for policy implementation (Ball 2008), it is the degree of interdependence that has changed due to the extent of fragmentation and the proliferation of actors involved in policy-making (Bache 2002).

Institutional settings are particularly important where the processes of 'government' are seen to have been transformed into 'governance' (Hill & Hupe 2009). Rather than focusing on conformity of policy outcomes with policy objectives, implementation is perceived as a problem of inter-organisational relationships and co-operation (O'Toole 2000). In noting progress in the synthesis of top-down/bottom-up approaches, O'Toole (2000) highlights contributions regarding the

connection between governance and implementation. Inter-organisational insights were applied to central and local government relations and the development of policy networks in the British polity during the 1980s (Rhodes 1988). Such developments broadened the perspective of policy implementation research to embrace multi-actors, foci and levels. Governance and policy networks became important research topics (Nilsen *et al* 2013) and policy networks developed as a major approach in the study of policy change (Pülzl & Treib 2007). In such settings, translating policy aims into action depends upon interaction between many separate actors each with their own interests and strategies, with attention given to the processes of coordination and collaboration among these individual, but mutually interdependent actors (Pülzl & Treib 2007).

The meaning of governance is much debated and its use and emphases vary (Pierre 2000). Baseline agreement in the literature about the term 'governance' refers to the development of styles of governing where the boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred (Stoker 1998). Traditional usage describes top-down, hierarchical steering actions by public authorities to mould their environment (Mayntz 2003) in which governance is seen as synonym for government (Stoker 1998). Contemporary usage concentrates on forms of control that go beyond that traditional description. These are about society being steered in new ways as the state learns from the emergence and development of complex networks and a growth in bottom-up approaches to decision making (Pierre & Peters 2000). For some, governance is not a synonym for government, but is a change in the meaning of government (Rhodes 1996). This is about a new process of governing that is more

participatory, built on the interactions of socio-political systems and reconfigures the boundaries of the state (Rhodes 1996). Its characteristics are inter-dependence between public, private and third sectors, resource exchange, negotiated processes and shared outcomes.

In this interdependence, while non-state policy actors have autonomy from the state, they are also connected to it through the self-organising nature of networks and the capacity of the state to steer and manage governance networks. Network management is done through negotiation and horizontal networks, policy communities and flexible organisational forms, rather than hierarchical command and control or market models (Rhodes 1997a). Government is increasingly characterised by diversity, decentralisation and fragmentation of delivery, power interdependence and policy networks, which are seen as an emerging and more efficient form of governance. However, this can also be perceived as a weakness as the mechanisms of governance are not built on the authority or sanctions of government (e.g. Peters & Pierre 1998; Stoker 1998). This does not mean that the state is impotent, that it has given up its capacity to steer policy (Marinetto 2005) or that it is being hollowed out as some claim (Rhodes 1994). Rather it is about maintaining public-sector resources under some sort of political control while sustaining the government's capacity to act (Peters & Pierre 1998). In short, it is the achievement of political ends by different means (Ball 2008, p. 747).

Governance is also described as multi-level. The term ‘multi-level governance’ is a relatively new one, which was developed to describe the emerging system of governance within the European Union (Marks 1992; Hooghe & Marks 2003).

Multi-level governance is a form of governance that emphasises relationships between a diverse range and mix of state and societal actors, in which government shifts from being state-centric to a multi-actor process of governance. In this view actors operate at supranational, central government, devolved administration, and local authority and quasi-government levels (e.g. Marks 1992; Hooghe & Marks 2003). Pierre and Peters (2000) describe three dimensions of multi-level governance in relation to tasks formerly undertaken by the state. 'Moving up' (Pierre & Peters 2000, pp. 83-87) describes international organisations taking over tasks. 'Moving down' (Pierre & Peters 2000, pp. 83-87) describes regional and/or local entities taking over tasks. 'Moving out' describes the delivery of tasks through the likes of privatisation (Pierre & Peters 2000, pp. 83-87). Tommel (1998) ascribes the emergence of multi-level governance to the decline of classical authoritative decision-making and reinforces the notion of the hollowing out of the state as functions either gravitate upwards to supranational level or downwards to, for example, devolved administrations, quangos or privatisation. Loughlin (2000) describes a shift from nation-state hierarchical government to an increasingly non-hierarchical, functionally based system. For Hill and Hupe (2002, 2009), governance and implementation are interconnected and complex. They observe that 'Implementation, then, refers to that part of governance that involves activities in relation to public tasks that follow the legitimate, directive decisions on those tasks' (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 194), while noting that, as discussed above, implementation currently takes many forms. For Hill and Hupe (2002, 2009), such is the degree of interconnection between governance and implementation that 'implementation can be seen as operational governance' (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 194).

Governance is a central element in this research and is considered to be broader than government, as it takes account of the design and operation of structures and processes of policy actions wherever they are. In that sense, governance is seen to be complementary to an emphasis on institutions. Governance highlights rules of the game and the role played by multiple social actors in a conglomeration of negotiation, implementation, and service delivery. Governance also pays attention to social partners and how activity between them is organised. These related aspects suggest that governance theory embraces many implementation themes.

Approaches to Policy-Making: Westminster Model & the Differentiated Polity Model

Structural decentralisation raises discussion of the political systems and internal governmental arrangements of states and generally contrasts unitary systems with federated systems. Up to 1998-99 Britain was customarily labelled as a unitary system, with its political system seen to conform to the 'Westminster model' (Gamble 1990, p. 407). The model should not be confused with how government has developed at Westminster, but instead should be seen as an ideal type or 'organising perspective' (Gamble 1990, pp. 405-6). Although variants of the model exist, its fundamental features are: parliamentary sovereignty, strong cabinet government, accountability through elections majority party control of the executive (that is prime minister, cabinet and the civil service), elaborate conventions for the conduct of parliamentary business, institutionalised opposition and rules of debate (Gamble 1990, p. 407; Judge 1993; Burch & Holliday 1996; Bevir & Rhodes 1999, pp. 216-18; Bevir & Rhodes 2006). Consequently, the British political system 'is generally perceived as having a hierarchical and unified political system with power

concentrated in the central institutions of the state' (Smith 1998a, p. 45) and top-down coordination in government (Peters 1998, p. 298). The model also makes a distinction between policy formulation and implementation, while attainment, or not of formal policy goals, are measures of success or failure (Kickert, Klijn & Koppenjan 1997, pp. 7-8; Marsh 1998, p. 9). In Scotland, the Westminster model saw a form of administrative devolution exercised by the Scottish Office and resulted in a considerable degree of Scottish autonomy for civil servants (Paterson 2000). These arrangements changed in 1999 with the establishment of the 'differentiated polity model' (Rhodes 1997a, 2000; Holliday 2000) of the Scottish Parliament that had a range of devolved powers including education and training (Finlay 2007). While the Westminster model has been the dominant paradigm since the 1960's, Massey (2001) asserts that the model, like the map of the London Underground, was never completely accurate and is more a representation of reality but not reality itself. Some consider the Westminster model to be misleading, partial and offering a very sketchy picture of British government (Rhodes 1997a; Rhodes 1997b; Smith 1998a; Bevir & Rhodes 1999; Smith 1999; Bevir & Rhodes 2006). Though significant parts of the Westminster model continue to be relevant and the nation-state is set to remain the pre-eminent unit of government, constitutional (devolution) and other changes (referenda), particularly since the 1980s, suggest that the United Kingdom has gradually moved away from the Westminster model. Rhodes (1997a, pp. 7-19) proposes 'the differentiated polity' model as an alternative organising perspective, from the viewpoint that the United Kingdom constitutes a union-state (Mitchell 1996) and that political integration and administrative homogenisation have never actually been achieved across its constituent parts. This alternative

organising perspective is 'characterized by functional and institutional specialization and the fragmentation of policies and politics' (Rhodes 1997, p.7). As Keating (2005) observes in relation to the 'union' state, political centralisation co-existed alongside administrative decentralisation. In such a system policy, such as the PFI, tended to converge across the UK, while policy outputs sometimes varied within the nation states of the UK (Keating 2005). Since the advent of political devolution post-1999, the chances of political integration and administrative homogenisation have receded even further, creating an even messier picture of government and policy-making. Devolution has brought political decentralisation in which the devolved entities, such as the Scottish Parliament and Executive develop their own 'tailored' policies and hence policy divergence, particularly in public service delivery (Keating 2005). For Lynch (2001) divergence is increasing. The ending of feudal tenure and land reform, it is argued, would not have happened under the Westminster model (Lynch 2001). Cairney (2007) cites other examples including the ban on smoking in enclosed public places through the *Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005*, providing 'free' personal care to older people through the *Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002*, reforms in mental health through the *Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003*, the abolition by the Scottish Executive of university tuition fees and the rejection by Scottish Executive Ministers of English NHS performance reforms. Lynch (2001) sees both continuity and change post-devolution, with change being the most obvious feature. However, as Lynch (2001) and Keating (2005) observe, convergence is not dead. For Lynch (2001), interdependence across policy areas such as health, law and order and agriculture are some examples, while for Keating (2005) pre-devolution

commitments have been inherited by the devolved entities. One particular case in point of that inheritance is the funding of the West Lothian College PFI. For Rhodes (1994, pp. 138-9), the differentiated polity (Bevir & Rhodes 2006) model sees a 'hollowing out' of the state, characterised by an increased tendency for central government responsibilities and programmes to be hived off to sub-national agencies, non-departmental public bodies and quangos (quasi autonomous non-governmental organisations). The loss of functions to the European Union and the introduction of 'new public management' also contribute (Rhodes 1994; Rhodes 1997a; Weller, Bakvis & Rhodes 1997). Second, the freedom of national governments to act as they wish is impacted upon by the process of globalisation (Schmidt 1995). Globalisation has seen the rise of transnational corporations with little attachment to nations and national interests; overall this has resulted in weakening the independence of nation-states and the voice of the people about societal concerns (Schmidt 1995). On the other hand, the independence of business has increased due to fewer constraints being imposed by national governments and no substitute at supranational level (Schmidt 1995). Thus the policy process and polities, including the British polity, are seen as increasingly complex, more contingent upon other actors and increasingly differentiated and fragmented.

New Public Management

In the same period as that of third generation research there was the advent of the 'new public management' (NPM). Hood (1991, p. 3) observes that NPM is frequently cited as the explanation for the emergence of governance. For Pollitt (1993, p. 1), NPM emerged as a new paradigm and influential approach to public administration reform (Aucoin 1990). During the post-war period, Keynesianism

brought government intervention to the economy, seeing it as necessary for the stability of the economy. Under Keynesianism, public spending was considered to be an important regulator, which could be used to stimulate the economy at a time of bust or to damp down growth at a time of boom. Also during this period, the welfare state in the UK had seen an increase in the range of social services sought from government. However, from the mid-1970s a post-Keynesian era emerged that had a more global context and influences such as the 1970s oil crisis and the increasing dominance of neo-liberal market ideology. The need for efficiencies and effectiveness (Wilenski 1986), doing 'more with less' (Hood 1991, pp. 4-5) and budgetary constraint through downsizing, privatisation and deregulation, became clarion calls of neo-classical and neo-liberal political actors (Wilenski 1986; Self 1993; Davis 1997). NPM evolved around this time and amid critiques of bureaucracy as the organising principle within public administration (Dunleavy 1991). Such critiques claimed that bureaucracy was inflexible, predicated by complex and hierarchical rule-based systems and top-down decision-making that, in combination, resulted in a distancing from the expectations of its publics. The 'bureau-professional regime' (Clarke & Newman 1997, pp. 12-13) was the traditional model or paradigm of organisational order that dominated the public sector during much of the post-war era (Simkins 2000) and the pre-incorporation further education sector. Drawing on Mintzberg's (1979, p. 377) notion of the 'bureau-professional organisation', Clarke and Newman (1997) view it as a mix of 'occupational and organisational dimensions' (Clarke & Newman 2005, p. 5). The values and power bases integral to the previously traditional bureau-professional regime came to be challenged in the UK during the 1980s by changes in public

policy that were effectively about forms of control (Simkins 2000). Such developments led to changes in styles of organisation and management in many public sector bodies, including further education (Mackie & Williamson 2007). The displacement and reshaping of bureau-professionalism took place during the 1980s-90s with a shift from '… an administered to a managed bureaucracy and from a system of public administration to one of new public management' (Horton & Farnham 1999, p. 145). Rather than thinking of NPM simply as changes, more leverage can be gained by construing it as a set of beliefs or values (Pollitt 1993). Such beliefs sit alongside changes like the introduction to the public sector of private sector disciplines and market principles in order to expunge the 'natural inefficiencies of bureaucracy' (Pollitt 1993, p. 49). NPM emerged as a new paradigm and influential approach to public administration reform (Aucoin 1990) comprising managerialism and marketisation (Hood (1991). NPM is viewed as an organisational theory and is described as a combination of economics, politics and business organisation theory characterised by contracts and consumers and a focus on outcomes (Peters & Pierre 1998). NPM's guiding principles have been summarised in detail by Hood (1995, pp. 95-97) and the OECD (1995, pp. 8-15) with its core characteristics generally described as:

- A focus on output controls.
- The disaggregation of more traditional bureaucratic organisations.
- The decentralisation of management authority.
- The introduction of market and quasi-market mechanisms.
- Customer-oriented services.

(Adapted from OECD 1995, pp. 8-15)

NPM has come to describe public sector reforms both globally and within the UK aimed at changing the organisation and administration of government and how governmental or public organisations should be run (Pollitt 1993; Newman & Clarke 1994). It combines the reconfiguration of existing public service delivery structures, with private sector management techniques, increased use of non-state (private, community, voluntary) actors, privatisation and/or denationalisation, and marketisation of those services that remain in the public domain. The state takes on an 'enabling' role as a purchaser of services, in which the delivery role is divorced from it, leaving the state to coexist with a growing number and mix of non-state actors at various levels, as will be discussed in more detail below. Despite the label 'new', Stoker (1996) cautions that the new public management agenda involves long established practices in Britain and elsewhere. For Hood (1991, p. 5) the NPM comprises the two different 'strands' of 'managerialism' and 'marketisation'. 'Managerialism' (Pollitt 1993, p.1) became evident in the UK from the late 1970s onwards and is regarded as being dominant until 1988 (Hood, et al. 1999, pp.189-190). It refers to the introduction of private sector management to the public sector. Rhodes (2000, p.7) refers to managerialism as having implemented the '3Es' of economy, efficiency and effectiveness throughout UK government (Yeatman 1987, pp. 339-346). Rhodes (2000) cites the features of managerialism as hands on professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance, managing by results, value-for-money and closeness to the customer (Rhodes 2000, p. 7). Post-1988, 'marketisation' (Rhodes (2000, p. 7), i.e. market forces in public services became the driver of innovation, holding characteristics such as

disaggregating bureaucracies, greater competition through contracting-out and quasi-markets, and consumer choice (Nilsen *et al* 2013).

Policy Networks

Policy networks are a specific form of networks within governance that describe and explain specific relations between actors within and between the state and non-governmental organisations (Rhodes 1997a). These relations concern policy making and implementation (Smith, 1993) in a particular sector such as further education in Scotland. There is no universal definition of the term 'policy network' (John 1998). As a generic term, policy networks refer to different forms of relationships between interest groups and the state, i.e. interest intermediation (Borzel 1998, p. 255). The definition offered by Benson (1982, p. 148) is used here:

> … a cluster … of organisations connected … by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies.

Actors, interdependence and mutual dependence around the co-operation and resources of other network actors are fundamental aspects of the policy network concept (Benson 1982). It explicitly focuses on relations among actors instead of their individual characteristics (Rhodes 1997a). It helps trace the interaction of actors, their resource sharing and the degree of influence each has (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a; Arregui, Stokman & Thomson 2004). Networks comprise many different dimensions of interaction. Rhodes and Marsh (1992a) identify four:

- Interests – who is primarily served.
- Membership – open or closed.
- Interdependence – with other networks and responsibility to produce outputs.

- Resources – money, knowledge, authoritative influence.

(Adapted from Rhodes & Marsh 1992a)

Policy networks illustrate the broad framework of interdependence within which policy is initiated and formulated. Policy networks are a meso-level concept of interest intermediation, which recognises that policy-making takes place within networks that have many layers and are self-organising (Rhodes 1997a, 2008). Rather than being inspired by either pluralist or corporatist approaches that view government as having an overarching and instrumental decision-making role (Dredge 2006), the policy networks approach is a conceptual framework that is multi-theoretic, draws upon both pluralist and corporatist approaches and can be combined with a broader theory of power. The network approach involves a range of interests in policy formulation and implementation that embrace public and private sectors and different parts of the same government (Dredge 2006). As policy networks are an exchange-based concept that explain actors' behaviour in terms of the pursuit of resources and resource exchange and bargaining (Thielemann 1998), they overcome the dichotomy of the top-down versus bottom-up policy implementation debate (Thielemann 1998). Network theory offers considerable potential to explain new governance structures and processes (Dredge 2006) as the degree of interdependence has changed due to the extent of fragmentation and the proliferation of actors involved in policy-making (Bache 2002).

Power-dependence is fundamental to the theory of policy networks, with the power-dependence framework used in this research as a way of seeking to explain network

behaviour (Rhodes 2008). Policy networks are resource dependent organisations, with their relationships characterised by power-dependence (Rhodes 2008). Such dependencies lie at the centre of policy networks, are their defining feature and the key variable in shaping policy outcomes (Bache 2002). Resources, formal decision-making power or knowledge are generally distributed, unevenly, over a wide range of policy actors, including government, who do not normally have all of the resources they need for solving the problems they encounter or perceive (Hill & Hupe 2009). Policy actors also seek to reduce or manage their resource dependence on other actors by employing different strategies (Hill & Hupe 2009). Actor behaviour is game-like, built on trust and regulated by the rules-of-the-game that have been negotiated and agreed by the actors in the network (Rhodes 2008).

The structure of power-dependency in policy networks varies (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). This helps identify five types of policy network ranging from highly integrated 'policy communities' to more freely integrated 'issue networks' as ideal types (Rhodes 1997). The type of policy network most relevant to this research is the 'policy community' (Ball 2008); the most integrated type of policy network. This refers to policy actors who have a common identity, interest or focus. Its emphasis is on a few privileged groups that have close ties with government, resulting in what is termed a 'sub-government' that excludes some interests and makes policy (Rhodes 2008). A network's internal structure helps determine policy outcomes, with its structure viewed as an independent variable (Peterson 2003). As a policy community type of network has a tightly integrated structure, it is considered to have greater capacity to steer or control the policy agenda (Peterson 2003). The

actors and organisations involved in a policy community are referred to as the 'appointed state' (Skelcher 1998) or 'insiders' (Rhodes 2008). The concepts of power-dependence and policy networks are recognisable at the level of further education in Scotland. In a further education context, insider actors/organisations gain representation on advisory committees, college boards and the funding council, which in turn are connected to and do the work of the state. A policy community also brings members of the 'power elite', that is, a small group of people who have a disproportionately large amount of control or influence, into a very specific relation (Ball 2008); in this instance to further education policy.

A particular strength of the policy networks approach is considered to be its emphasis on policy implementation (Rhodes 1986a). It offers opportunities for collaborative solutions and innovation (Agranoff 2003, in Ball 2008b, pp. 5-6). As the network approach highlights that implementation is best understood as a part of the entire policy and planning process, it is a way of overcoming rigid distinctions between policy-makers and implementers and between top-down and bottom-up approaches (Jordan 1995). From that perspective, implementation is seen to be embedded in a wider policy process mediated by networks. Network models are not only policy implementers, they can also play a significant part in other aspects of the policy process, such as getting a particular issue on the political agenda, decision making and evaluation (Jordan 1995). This suggests that implementation is best considered as a component of the whole policy process.

Policy networks can offer policy implementation success by facilitating consultative governance, reducing policy conflict and making policy foreseeable, while fitting

well with bureaucratic organisations (Hill & Hupe 2002). Networks have not only become an important foundation of governance, but are also seen to be particularly suited to handling complex or wicked problems (Hill & Hupe 2009). One specific example of a complex problem from the further education sector in Scotland was the financial instability in the sector caused by unfettered growth in student numbers. When using the lens of policy network theory to study policy networks, the phenomenon of network structure is a key characteristic as the structure of a network affects policy outcomes (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). Structural features such as tight and consultative relationships between network actors (Gains 2003) have more influence on policy outcomes than do behavioural or institutional features (Marsh & Rhodes 1992). Networks with high dependency relationships are most able to influence operational outcomes (Gains 2003), as policy makers cannot easily dismiss operational level actors who have considerable power and influence over what actually happens on the ground (Arregui, Stokman & Thomson 2004). Networks with a high degree of integration through mutual understanding between actors of policy goals, problems and solutions, tend to result in smoother implementation (Gains 2003).

Network management refers to the constitution of a relevant network and to satisfactory facilitation of learning processes (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006, p. 10). Network management has been developed as an instrument to ensure that the qualities of proportional representation, openness, equity, fairness and reliability are present in network interaction processes. Given the variety of goals and interests and, as a result, the actual and potential conflict over the distribution of costs and

benefits, co-operation is not automatic and does not develop without problems. Concerted action can be improved through incentives for co-operation, through process and conflict management, and through the reduction of risks linked to co-operation. Given its special position and the fact that government is supposed to protect the common interest, safeguard democratic values and be publicly accountable for its actions, this frequently makes it acceptable to others as a process manager.

The policy networks approach is not without its critics (e.g. Dowding 1995; Borzel 1998; Marsh 1998). The most important criticisms were summarised under six headings (Peterson 2003). The first is that the policy network approach lacks theoretical foundations and clear concepts. Second is that the network concept is fundamentally metaphoric, is mainly descriptive, does not offer explanations of outcomes of policy processes and consequently lacks real explanatory power. Third is the criticism that it neglects the role of power. The fourth criticism concerns a lack of clear evaluation criteria. The fifth criticism concerns normative objections against networks and the role of public actors within them. The sixth and final criticism is that the literature on policy networks is often vague and wrapped up in insular and purely academic debates about terminology (Peterson 2003). These are robustly countered with a defence of policy networks (e.g. Peterson 2003). Policy network theorists argue that the approach is not fundamentally descriptive and static (Dowding 1995). Proponents of the policy networks approach consider that it enhances their understanding, at a general level, of exogenous and endogenous actors of change (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a), and gives an appreciation of the effect such

change has on policy outcomes. For example, Smith (1993) and Marsh (1998) have used the policy network approach to explain change. Originally developed to explain policy stability not change (John 1998), the policy network tool has since become the preferred approach for analysing the operation of public policy in the United Kingdom (Dowding 1995). Despite its critics, policy networks continue to be an extremely valuable analytical tool for understanding the policy-making process. With its assistance, policy processes can be analysed, explained and evaluated (e.g. (Klijn & Kopenjan 2000; Peterson 2003).

Policy Network Analysis

Policy network analysis (PNA) is useful in exploring implementation, interdependencies and power, and is used in policy implementation studies to give an account of the success or failure of implementing policy. Its overall aims are to determine what interests dominate bargaining within networks (Peterson 2003) and understand how relationships between actors involved in the policy-making process determine the outcomes of collective policy decisions Smith (2000). It explores how, why and under what conditions a policy intervention may succeed or fail (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006) and seeks to explain policy outcomes by examining how networks are structured. PNA identifies the key actors in policy-making organisations, describes and explains the structure of their interactions during policy-making processes, and explains and predicts collective policy decisions and outcomes (Peterson 2003). PNA is the most common kind of network analysis in political science (Rhodes 2006). PNA focuses on the relationship between processes of interest intermediation and their impact on policy-making outcomes (Peterson 2003). Its overall aims are to determine what interests dominate bargaining within

networks (Peterson 2003) and understand how relationships between actors involved in the policy-making process determine the outcomes of collective policy decisions. For Peterson (2003, p. 3), PNA begins with three basic assumptions. The first is that contemporary governance is often non-hierarchical, involves interdependence between public and private actors, with few policies simply imposed by public authorities (Peterson 2003, p. 3). Second, as relationships between government and groups vary, the policy process has to be disaggregated so that it can be understood (Peterson 2003, p. 3). Third, governments ultimately remain responsible for governance (Peterson 2003, p. 3).

PNA stresses the importance of resource dependencies for interaction between actors involved in policy implementation (Rhodes 1986). It draws attention to changing resource dependencies and changing patterns of interaction as a result of these interdependencies (Rhodes 1986). It addresses the relationship between power and institutions, with power-dependency theory at the heart of PNA (Rhodes 1986). The core analytical device in PNA is resource interdependence and the distribution, mobilisation and exchange of resources in the network (Wilks & Wright 1987). The basic units of analysis are the type of policy network and the actors acting within it (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006). Analysis also includes a network's appreciative system, rules-of-the-game and the strategies of network actors in dealing with each other. Analysis can explain why some actors are excluded from the policy process, whilst others exercise decision and non-decision making power (Smith 2000).

In PNA, implementation failure is mainly attributed to uncertainty, a lack of institutionalisation of the relevant network and/or poor performance by the network

manager (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006, p. 10). Conversely, implementation success is attributed to good network management, i.e. the constitution of a relevant network and to satisfactory facilitation of learning processes (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006, p. 10). PNA also utilises the concept of learning and distinguishes between substantive, strategic and institutional learning processes.

The following three features give support to applying a policy community model of PNA to this research. First, the further education sector in Scotland is a national public service that is locally delivered (Griggs 2012). It operates in a differentiated polity (Rhodes 1997) and within the context and rules given to it by government. Implementation is driven by the funding council through policy and management guidance (Griggs 2012). There is a sector specific policy network in the form of a policy community with interests, membership, interdependence and resources (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a). Second, further education policy is made in a relatively closed, stable and regulated setting by an exclusive and small group of major interests comprising the Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council, the Principals' Forum (as the representative of colleges) and Scotland's Colleges (as the sector's employers' representative). Only occasionally are those outside of this closed world of major interests (Rhodes 1997) allowed in. Third, policy-making in the sector is underpinned by the Scottish Funding Council, Principals' Forum and Scotland's Colleges. Government relies on these officials, experts and other stakeholders to overcome dissent, broker agreement and move the policy agenda forward before decisions are taken by government.

Power

Bringing the lens of 'power' (Lukes 1974, 2005) into the framework helps examine how government exercises power. Power is a 'dispositional concept', meaning that power 'is a potentiality, not an actuality - indeed a potentiality that may never be actualized' (Lukes 2005, p. 69). There can be 'power over', which limits the actions or constrains the choices of others, or 'domination' where the exercise of power over others subverts their real interests (Lukes 2005, p. 73). 'Real interests' refers to the scope for a person to live their life according to 'how his nature and judgements dictate' (Lukes 2005, p. 123). Power is exercised in three ways:

- Decision-making power (one-dimensional).
- Non-decision-making power (two-dimensional).
- Ideological power / preference shaping (Three-dimensional).

(Adapted from Lukes 1974)

Decision-making power is the most obvious, observable and public dimension as it takes place in formal institutions and is measured by the outcomes that arise from the decisions made. Non-decision-making power sees government control agenda setting and hence what is and isn't discussed. It is less obvious and utilises formal and informal techniques to get what it wants including bias, influence, coercion and exclusion, resulting in observable overt and covert conflict. The most important is preference-shaping power which is used to influence people's thoughts, perceptions and wants rather than their needs through policy-making, action and language. This leads to 'contradictions between the interests of those exercising power and the real interests of those they exclude' Lukes (1974, p. 23). It is the most hidden and least

observable of the three and the one that individuals are also least consciously aware of.

Networks & Social Capital

It is useful to combine policy networks with the notion of 'social capital' which is about advantage and is concerned with the resources that people obtain through interaction with others (Milward & Provan 1998). It describes the processes by which people establish networks, norms and social trust for mutual benefit. By doing so the impact of both 'structure' and 'agency' on processes may be examined to see which of these determines the behaviour of individuals (Giddens 1984). Structure refers to rules and resources while agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and the freedom to make their own choices (Giddens 1984). The benefits to policy networks of social capital are seen to be better working relationships, higher degrees of trust, greater cooperation between actors, easier information sharing and lower transaction costs (Baron, Field & Schuller 2000; Monge & Contractor 2003).

Historical Institutionalism

'Historical institutionalism' (Hall & Taylor 1996, pp. 6-10) combines PNA with a model of the actor and puts an emphasis on the behaviour of actors in policy networks and not just on the structure of networks (Blom-Hansen 1997). As networks have rules that constrain the actions of participating actors they can be understood as institutions (Blom-Hansen 1997, p. 676). Historical institutionalism offers a theoretical basis that can account for human behaviour within networks. It emphasises 'path dependency' (Berman 1998; Gains *et al* 2005), which is the tendency of a past or traditional practice or preference to continue even if better

alternatives are available. It is important in the historical development of institutions and their subsequent causal effects. Unintended consequences in already established institutions are attributed to path dependence.

Policy Learning

Policy learning is a source of policy change and an integral part of the policy process (Hall 2011). It is a stimulus to consider other policy (Hall 2011) and requires alterations in frames of thinking, values and meanings (Sabatier 1993). It is a type of collective learning, as policy is designed and implemented by a range of organisations. It involves learning by a number of organisations rather than just one. That introduces complexity about who learns what and why, as there is thinking within organisations and between organisations. The policy making process is 'social learning' (Hall 1993, p. 278) and learning takes different forms depending on which of three policy variables change (Hall 1993):

- The precise settings of policy instruments (first order).
- The techniques or policy instruments/tools used to attain overarching policy goals (second order).
- The overarching policy goals that guide policy-makers (third order).

(Adapted from Hall 1993)

Governmental institutions are the locus of that change and they learn when they alter their policy goals, rules, regulations and implementation as a result of past experience and new information (Hall 1993). Shifts in the first two variables are 'normal' policy making (Hall 1993). Third order change follows a seismic shift that alters the overarching policy goals of a policy area (Hall 1993). This is as a

paradigm shift and is considered to be periodic (Hall 1993). Social learning takes place when change goes beyond the boundaries of a policy community (Hall 1993).

Literature Gap

The literature review showed a gap in the literature concerning a policy network analysis approach to policy implementation in further education in Scotland. A search for empirical studies of education in the UK showed that the schools sector in Scotland has been relatively well researched (e.g. Humes 1986, 1997; McPherson & Raab 1998). In relation to networks in education the search identified Marker's (1994) study of policy making in teacher education in Scotland and Raab's (1992) study of education policy making in Britain. It also showed that some research had been undertaken into local post-16 sector governance networks in England. The conclusion was that a policy network analysis approach to policy implementation in further education in Scotland was under-researched (McTavish 1998, p. 127). The review suggests that policy networks provide the opportunity for a fuller explanation of the strategic relationship between colleges and government and offer a locus for much fruitful research (McTavish 1998, p. 126). McTavish (1998, p. 126) considers that researching how a policy community in further education works would be 'fascinating'.

Conceptual Framework

The literature review has demonstrated the usefulness of the policy network approach to analysing the process of policy implementation, where government and interest groups are involved in complex and technical issues. As a middle-range theory, it enables the analysis of processes, key policy actor actions and interdependencies in the formulation and implementation of policy in the Further Education sector in

Scotland. It is against that background that PNA is proposed as the basis for a useful analytical framework to examine and explain the implementation of three policies as they related to the Further Education sector in Scotland and specifically the West Lothian College. To enhance the utility and explanatory power of the framework and obtain a greater understanding of the performance of policy networks and outcomes from them, it is combined with other theories and approaches outlined in the review. Using power and power-dependence further enhances its utility by examining how power occurs in policy networks. Applying the notion of social capital enables the impact of both structure and agency on implementation processes to be examined. Power and the study of institutions go hand-in-hand and indeed highlight different dimensions of power. Bringing in historical institutionalism and path-dependence takes PNA beyond description and into explanation of policy networks. It allows policy networks to be understood as institutions. Finally, the framework can be further enhanced by combining it with the notion of policy learning. As policy learning is a source of policy change and is an integral part of the policy process, it can provide an important opportunity for and a stimulus to consider other policy.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter points to a number of salient and interlinking key concepts important for this study. Overall key concepts identified from the review are that public policy implementation is complex, messy and can have unintended consequences. More specifically policy, policy goals and policy interplay were three key concepts identified from the review. Next was the impact of policy following its implementation and unintended consequences. A single and

significant key concept is the actual process of policy implementation. Changes in structures and changes in actors involved in the process are also key concepts, as are policy learning and change. The presence and use of power, collective and individual action by actors, networks as institutions and human behaviour within networks make up the last of the key concepts. These aspects of the literature review are pertinent to this study. They provide the basis for the research and will be considered in the design of the research. The review also revealed that a theoretical framework for understanding and studying policy implementation remains elusive. It also shows that to date, no significant work has been done concerning a policy network analysis approach to policy implementation in further education in Scotland. The review has demonstrated the usefulness of the policy network approach to analysing the process of policy implementation and it is against that background that PNA is proposed as the basis for a useful analytical framework to examine and explain the implementation of three policies as they related to the Further Education sector in Scotland and specifically the West Lothian College. The next chapter discusses how the research was conducted.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I identified key concepts from the literature concerning public policy implementation. This chapter presents the methodology and methods used in order to explore these concepts. The chapter begins by presenting the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research and clarifying my role as the researcher. It explains why a qualitative approach was warranted and the rationale for the research design, methodology and methods. Data gathering and analysis strategies are presented and the limitations of the research are identified. Criticisms, ethical issues and power relationships are considered and addressed. The means of reporting the research and its audiences are identified.

Philosophical Assumptions

Before turning to research design, the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research are made explicit. My philosophical assumptions and beliefs flow from the interpretive tradition, which subscribes to 'constructivism' (Creswell 2003). I therefore assume the nature of inquiry to be interpretive and that people create and associate their own subjective and intersubjective meanings as they interact with the world around them (Creswell 2003). Interpretivism guided my thinking and behaviour as a researcher in relation to the ways in which data about the phenomenon of this research were gathered, analysed and used (Creswell 2003). My beliefs about the nature of reality are informed by relativist ontology. I assume that reality as we know it is a human construction, which is constructed inter-subjectively through meanings and understandings that are developed socially and experientially.

I assume reality is subjective, may change and there can be multiple social realities (Creswell 2003). As different people construct meaning in different ways, there can be many meanings, even when people experience the same social event (Creswell 2003). Further, my beliefs about what constitutes the nature of knowledge are guided by a transactional or subjectivist epistemology**.** This assumes we cannot separate ourselves from what we know and that reality cannot be separate from our knowledge of it. This implies that who we are and how we understand the world is a key part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world. As the researcher I was linked with the phenomenon being investigated and therefore my values are intrinsic in all stages of the research process. 'Truth' therefore is negotiated through dialogue with informants. Given these characteristics, an interpretivist philosophical framework was considered to be congruent with the exploratory nature of the research aim and research questions.

Research Design

The research design was the logical sequence that connected the empirical data to the study's research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions (Yin 2003a, Yin 2003b). It was the blueprint for the study. The rationale for the design is explained. The methodological issues of the thesis and the unit of analysis are presented. The design identifies the reasons for selecting the West Lothian College, it describes the data sources that were used, how the data was collected and how the data were analysed. The design is presented so that other researchers can replicate the research (Yin 1994).

As a research approach, case study is about asking the delicate and, more importantly, explanatory 'how?' and 'why?' research questions in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of how things happen (Orum & Feagin 1991). It is about getting a rounded and pragmatic picture of a situation and its character from the perspective of the participants through the use of different methods (Hakim 1987, pp. 8-9). Obtaining such a picture was critically important in the West Lothian College case study. The design for the study was a qualitative instrumental single case study intended to provide an in-depth examination of the policy implementation process. The rationale for selecting that research design is explained here. First, the focus of the study was to answer exploratory "how" and "why" research questions (Yin 1984). The aim of these questions was to gain both an insight into and in-depth understanding of the complex phenomenon of the West Lothian College case and look for explanation (Creswell 2003). There was a unique story to be told here. That suggested detailed examination and explanation of how and why policy and policy implementation decisions had been conceptualised, perceived and implemented, with what knowledge and under what conditions and constraints. The case study research design offered the ability to answer such questions appropriately (Yin 1984). Second, I had no control over the events and was not able to manipulate the behaviour of the elite political and organisational participants involved in the study (Yin 1984). Third, I believed the contextual conditions were highly relevant to the study and that the best way to acquire that new knowledge was to observe the phenomenon in its context (Stake 1995). Unless the case was considered in its context, I believed that it would not be possible to have a true picture of it. I felt case study methodology would enable an in-depth analysis of that real-life setting (Yin

1994). Fourth, the boundaries between what was being studied and the context of the case were difficult to distinguish (Yin 1994). Fifth, a case study methodology offered the use of multiple data sources (Yin 1994). I considered that bringing different sources, such as interviews and analysis of official documents together in the analysis process would contribute to my understanding of the whole phenomenon (Yin 1994). I felt this would add strength to the findings as the various strands of data are weaved together to promote a greater understanding of the case. Mindful of my research aim, the research questions and these characteristics, I considered that case study methodology was warranted.

It is acknowledged that the notion of a 'case' and its meaning are not well defined and continues to be a subject of debate (Gillham 2000). Having made that acknowledgement, the West Lothian College, as a contemporary phenomenon specific to a time and place, was conceptualised as a 'case' (Ragin & Becker 1992) in the context of its rebuilding through the PFI. It was the interesting topic of the study (Yin 1994) and 'an instance of some concern' (Creswell 1998, p. 61). The unit of analysis (Tellis 1997) was the actual source of the information (Yin 1994). This was a cultural system of action in the form of a closed, highly integrated, sectoral, public policy-making community, in which the college was a member, actor and resource-dependent organisation. The boundaries between the real-world phenomenon of the West Lothian College's funding difficulties and the context were not clear and were difficult to separate out. It is also acknowledged that there is no agreed definition of the term 'case study' and that it is a 'slippery concept' and 'umbrella term' (Adelman, Jenkins & Kemmis 1977, pp. 139-150; Bassey 1995, pp.

109-117). Having acknowledged this, the case 'study' (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg 1991) here was the study that examined the West Lothian College case in order to answer the research questions (Gillham 2000, p. 1). The case study was of the 'instrumental' type (Stake 1994, p. 237) as the purpose of the research was to gain an insight into the external interest of how and why public policy implementation had resulted in policy mess and unintended consequences. The choice of the case had been made to advance the understanding of that external interest (Stake 1994, 1995). Although the case itself was still examined in depth, it was not for the purposes of critiquing the PFI. Yes, the PFI had enabled the rebuilding of the college and was part of the context. However, the PFI of itself was not the external interest. This instrumental case study focused on the experience of the college's rebuilding through the PFI as a way to address a concern with the process of public policy implementation that went beyond that specific experience. The external interest was in the overall policy implementation process, the linking of three policies, the resulting interplay of these policies and the consequences of that. The case therefore was used instrumentally, was of secondary interest and served as an instrument to deepen understanding and play a supportive role (Stake 1994, p. 237) in exploring policy mess and the resultant unintended consequences.

A single qualitative case study was selected as that would provide in-depth analysis of the specific problem of the West Lothian College's funding difficulties, elicit a deeper understanding and explanation of how events had happened and draw attention to what specifically could be learned from the case (Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg 1991). This was reinforced by the literature which confirmed that although

qualitative and quantitative research methodologies had been used, single, qualitative case studies dominated (O'Toole 2000; Winter 2012). The West Lothian College case study was also a single case as there was no opportunity for replication. That demanded careful investigation to avoid misrepresentation and maximise my access to evidence (Tellis 1997). While I had searched for analogous cases (Glaser & Strauss 1967), this ultimately proved unproductive. I did find that two smaller-scale further education estates projects in Scotland had been funded through the PFI (PFI Scotland 2001). Both were annexes to the main campuses of existing colleges. The first of these, the Stirling Centre, was a small annexe built for the then Falkirk College whose main campus was in the town of Falkirk. The Stirling Centre, based in the nearby town of Stirling, opened in January 1998 to serve the inhabitants of the Stirling area who were poorly served for further education (PFI Scotland 2001). The second was the North Ayrshire Campus of the James Watt College, whose main campus was in the town of Greenock. This project involved the provision of a 9,000 sq. m annex located in the town of Kilwinning and to serve the North Ayrshire area that was poorly served for further education. It was completed in June 2000 (PFI Scotland 2001). As noted above, both of these projects were annexes to the main campuses of colleges that were themselves to continue in operation. In contrast, the West Lothian College PFI project was a very different proposition. It was intended to provide a wholly new replacement campus, not an annexe, in a different town, Livingston. The then West Lothian College main campus, located in Bathgate, was an integral part of the financing of the PFI deal (West Lothian College 1997; PFI Scotland 2001). The proceeds from the disposal of the Bathgate campus were to be used to reduce the level of payments that the college would make to the PFI partner

for its use of the new Livingston Campus. From the above, it was clear that there were substantive differences between these PFI-procured projects. While it is acknowledged that they were all in the further education sector in Scotland, in terms of context, purpose, scale and complexity, they were very different. Consequently, I discounted conducting a comparative study into the West Lothian College case using these two projects.

To increase accuracy and validity, address any potential design problems and ensure that valid meanings can be drawn from the data, a triangulated research strategy was employed that combined two or more data sources to identify patterns of convergence (Tellis 1997). Adjudicating between accounts from policy network actors or official documents in terms of their strengths, weaknesses and completeness was not always clear cut. Therefore, triangulation was considered better suited to ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging more reflexive analysis (Mays & Pope 2000). Reflexivity was adopted as a personal strategy for managing the movement between observation and theory. It helped me re-conceptualise validity and develop a conscious self-understanding of the research process (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995, p. 192). Reflexivity made me think about the research cycle in a more informed way and with greater clarity. This was particularly so regarding the inter-connectedness of the various stages in the research cycle and linking these with the research question and sub-questions. Crucially, this demonstrated validity for both myself as the researcher and the study's audience (Wainwright 1997). How similar my understanding of a construct was when compared to the generally accepted understanding of it by respondents was addressed by construct validity (Cohen,

Manion & Morrison 2000). However, as this brings the possibility of researcher bias, I used multiple sources of evidence, established a chain of evidence and had a draft case study report reviewed by key participants to counter such a possibility (Yin 1994). How well the explanation of an event can be sustained by the data in an explanatory case study is a concern, as it is often comes down to inferences rather than an absolute black or white outcome (Tellis 1997, p. 10). Pattern matching was used here to address internal validity concerns (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 107). As a single-case study, this research is open to criticism about whether the results are generalisable beyond the immediate case. This is discussed more fully when considering case study strengths and weaknesses. Finally, to strengthen the reliability of this case study, it was considered desirable to develop a case study protocol (Yin 1994, pp. 63-74), which is shown in Appendix 2.

Strengths & Weaknesses

As a research strategy, case studies have been utilised in many circumstances, including policy. They are increasingly used as a research tool and are 'an all-encompassing method' and a 'comprehensive research strategy' Yin (1994, pp. 1-13). For Feagin, Orum & Sjoberg (1991) case study is an appropriate methodology when a holistic, in-depth study is required of a cultural system of action. It is a preferred research strategy where 'operational links … traced over time' rather than 'frequencies or incidence', are more important (Yin 1994, p. 6). Such matters were highly pertinent to the West Lothian College case. For Tellis (1997, p. 5), case study fulfils the three principles of the qualitative approach i.e. 'describing, understanding, explaining'. It also allows for unique and possibly unusual aspects of the policy implementation processes to emerge from the data and the opportunity to deal with a

wide range and variety of evidence (Stake 1995). It is a way to engage a wide range of participants in data gathering and findings, and use a number of different methods to gather the desired information. A significant advantage is the ability to use the results as a basis for developing research questions that can then be analysed in greater depth through further inquiry. Context plays a key part in the case study approach (Yin 1994, p. 13) and is highly pertinent to the West Lothian College case. Additionally, phenomenon and context are often difficult to separate out when looking at real-world situations such as that of West Lothian College's funding difficulties. For Yin, (1994, p. 13), this is not problematic, as the scope of a case study approach and the design of its data collection and analysis strategies, enable such issues to be coped with. In causal terms and, again, highly relevant to West Lothian College, case studies are viewed as being able to accommodate a wider variety of 'causal processes' (Hakim 1987, p.8). An indication of causal processes is given later in the discussion of case selection. Yin (1994, p. 9) observes that 'case studies have been viewed as a less desirable form of inquiry than either experiments or surveys'. Lack of rigour as a methodology is cited as a considerable concern when compared to more experimental methodologies (Yin 1994, p. 9). A fundamental weakness of case study methodology can be inadequate preparation of the activities demanded by the study design and commencing data collection before the design and analytical procedures have been carefully worked out and piloted. Methodological rigour was applied in this case study and how that was done is fully described later in this chapter.

Criticism of case study is often made in relation to the ability of the data from a particular case to represent the 'truth'. Additionally, it is also claimed that dependence on a single-case makes it incapable of providing a generalising conclusion and that results are not widely applicable in real life (Tellis 1997). However, Yin (1994) observes that general applicability comes from the case study's methodological qualities and the robustness of its design, and that generalisation of results, from either single- or multiple-cases, is in relation to theory and not populations. While statistically reliable generalisation to populations cannot be made, I believe the research design is robust enough to enable me to generalise my findings to the process of policy implementation using analytic generalisation (Yin 1994). Given that the aim of a case study is to obtain a deep understanding of the complexity of cases, insights gained during data collection can be used to inform theory. Yin (1994, pp. 100-113) regards case study work as 'explanation-building' and views this as a more difficult form of theorising. Dyer, Gibb and Wilkins (1991) assert that any theorising in advance risks blinkered insights and that the inquirer should hold as few pre-conceived ideas as possible. Results are also more subjective, compared to other types of research, with considerable reliance on the experience and knowledge of the inquirer. Personal interests and values play a part and can influence which part(s) of the study the researcher focuses on. The opportunity for researcher bias i.e. unfairly favouring one thing at the expense of another is therefore high and has to be guarded against. One strategy is to be open to contrary findings and have others critique preliminary findings (Yin 1994). As an inexperienced researcher, I have sought to counter the possibility of such criticism through the development and application of a robust research design, which itself was the subject

of robust and formal scrutiny through the EdD procedures. This included a mini viva, comprising an academic panel of two professors and another researcher, at which I credibly presented and defended my research proposal. As discussed more fully earlier, my engagement with a professional Education Doctorate programme encouraged me to critically reflect upon previously held blinkered insights and removed me from the ways in which my knowledge had become situated socially as a result of context, cultural and institutional experiences (Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989). Case study methodology can also be human resource intensive and extremely time consuming (Yin 1994, p. 10). As the main research instrument in this study I found myself sympathetic to such a view.

Rejection of Other Designs

'Purposive sampling' had been considered as an alternative research design. However, case study was ultimately favoured over purposive sampling as it was viewed as being more concerned with 'how?' and 'why?' research questions, in-depth analysis and explanation of a very clearly defined situation i.e. the case of West Lothian College. 'Sampling' is a process used in social science research to define the size of the population on which the research will focus (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). There are two main methods of sampling (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000). These are 'probability' and 'non-probability' sampling. In probability sampling, also known as random sampling, 'the chances of members of the wider population being selected are known' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 99). In non-probability sampling, also known as purposive sampling, 'the chances of members of the wider population being selected are unknown' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 99). 'Purposive sampling' is one type of non-probability sampling

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp. 103-104). In qualitative studies purposive sampling is particularly suited to examining the lived experience of a unique population. The participants in the study are purposively picked as they are regarded as being particularly informative (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, pp. 103-104). Given that this piece of research was concerned with public policy implementation, it would have been reasonable to select such participants from the appropriate policy network. However, a number of concerns about this design suggested significant limitations. Whilst for me as researcher it would have been very easy to put together a sample, it could never be claimed to be truly representative of the wider public policy implementation community. A more general concern was that there are limitations to the inferences that can be drawn from purposive sampling when the probability of the selection is not known. For (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 104), purposive sampling is 'deliberately and unashamedly selective and biased'. It is now helpful to locate West Lothian College as a contemporary phenomenon of interest in the above discussion.

Specific Research Methods

The review of case study methodology shows that multiple sources of evidence are characteristic of case study research design and that no single source of evidence is likely to be sufficiently valid on its own to make claims to knowledge (Gillham 2000). The knowledge claims of this research are based upon interpretivist perspectives of multiple meanings gained primarily from individual experiences and participatory perspectives (Creswell 2003, p. 18) using the qualitative methods of semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis. Multiple sources were important in this study as it was the perspectives of participants in the policy network

that were key to developing an in-depth, holistic picture and to form the basis of the subsequent claims made to knowledge or 'truth'. The material gathered and data generated has been used to present and support the research findings and inform the conclusions.

Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview was the primary source of evidence and one of three research instruments, the other two being documentary analysis and myself as the main research instrument. Semi-structured interviews offered the opportunity to obtain in-depth insights regarding the system of action of the policy network in question. They enabled me to draw upon the individual opinions and attitudes of key elite (Parry 2005) informants with an active involvement in the West Lothian College case and took me beyond the limitations of highly structured interviews. The actual one-to-one interviews undertaken are discussed more fully in the Data Gathering Strategy section that follows.

Documentary Analysis

The second research instrument of documentary analysis supplemented the interview data. Documentary analysis is a non-intrusive form of research that involved reviewing relevant documents for content and themes. The documents reviewed included official reports, public documents and other pieces of written information, such as on-the-record testimony to the Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament. The actual documentary analysis undertaken in this research is more fully discussed in the Data Gathering Strategy section that follows.

Data Gathering Strategy

The data gathering strategy employed refers to site access, respondent access and official document access. My professional and personal networks made access to both the case and the organisational and political elites much easier than might have been so for another researcher. This was because of my own intimate involvement in the case. In terms of site access, this was negotiated and agreed in advance of the research with the Principal and the Chair of the Board of Governors of West Lothian College. Respondent access was negotiated and agreed in advance with an initial sample of fifteen organisational and political elites to obtain an insider's/outsider's account. The categories and codes ascribed to the participants to protect their anonymity are shown in Appendix 4. As I had known all of the respondents through my active and intimate professional involvement in the case, this proved to be a considerable advantage in terms of access when I initially approached them about my research. All willingly agreed to participate without hesitation. Having agreed to be interviewed, one of the fifteen, Respondent H, subsequently chose not to answer any further contact. This Senior Civil Service individual in the then Scottish Executive, who had a pivotal role in the entire events of the West Lothian College case from conception to contract signature, had enthusiastically agreed to participate in my research and to be interviewed. Like the remaining participants, this participant had been sent all of the information shown in Appendix 3. However, the individual subsequently failed to acknowledge or answer repeated attempts by this researcher to arrange the interview. The situation was fully discussed with my EdD Supervisor and the removal of this individual from the study was subsequently agreed with my EdD Supervisor. The reasons for this turn of events remain unknown to this

researcher. For reasons of confidentiality, I did not discuss this matter with any of the other interviewees.

The fourteen remaining organisational and political elites comprised:

- One former Scottish Executive, Senior Civil Service, Civil Servant (SESCS).
- Two members of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee (MSP).
- One former Labour Government, Scottish Executive Cabinet Member (SECM).
- One former Conservative Government, Scottish Office Minister (SOM).
- One former senior executive in the sector body for further education in Scotland (SBFES).
- Two Scottish Funding Council senior executives (SFC).
- One private sector partner senior executive (PS).
- Two West Lothian College Board of Governors members (WLCBG).
- One former West Lothian College Board of Management member (WLCBM).
- Two West Lothian College senior managers (WLCSM).

I considered that this selection of participants allowed for a reasonable mix of actors and interests from within the policy network, while also being a manageable number to interview. Table 5 shows the sampling frame and the distribution of the elites.

Elite	SB FES	SE SCS	SE CM	MSP	SOM	SFC	WLC BG	WLC BM	WLC SM	PS	Interview Location
A							√				West Lothian College
B							√				West Lothian College
C								√			West Lothian College
D	√										Their Home
E			√								Their Office
F		√									Café
G					√						Their Office
H*		√									Removed
I									√		West Lothian College
J									√		West Lothian College
K						√					Their Offices
L						√					Their Office
M										√	West Lothian College
N				√							Their Office
O				√							Their Office
*This individual was removed from the study.											

Table 5 Sampling Frame, Distribution of Elites
&
Location of Interview

The respondents were selected because each had high-level involvement in, and their own detailed knowledge of, the West Lothian College case. In various ways, each had been close to policy development, policy implementation and its consequences. They had also played very different roles in the policy network, with differing degrees of involvement and, for some, at different times. Such a spectrum of engagement was useful in helping uncover how policy priorities and their implementation had been influenced and changed over time, along with their view of the drivers of such events. The majority of empirical material amassed in this research would not have been known had I not drawn upon the views and experience of these fourteen organisational and political elites (Delaney 2007).

The notion of power relationships discussed in the previous chapter had made me made me think carefully about the organisational issues around the method of semi-structured interviews, particularly with elites (Parry 2005). Given the above, careful preparation and planning were recognised as being essential and an interview schedule (Appendix 3) was developed in advance of conducting the fifteen planned interviews. The schedule helped me think about how to plan, arrange, conduct and record the interviews. My approach to this was based on being flexible in conducting the interviews, ensuring transparency when communicating with the elites and establishing and maintaining good etiquette with all interviewees as a way of ensuring the highest professional standards (Fenno 1978; Kingdon 1989; Goldstein 2002; Delaney 2007).

The five interview questions, which had been developed from the research questions, were framed as broadly as possible to give the respondents sufficient scope, yet not

confine or limit the respondents. At the same time they provided a structure for the interview and a guide for respondents regarding the general area of discussion. The specific questions used in each interview were:

1. What are your views of the funding situation at West Lothian College?
2. To what extent were the problems caused by a mismatch between pre-1997/1999 policies (like PFI, Incorporation and funded student growth) and post-1999 policies?
3. What role in the emergence of the problems has been played by politicians, civil servants and funding council staff?
4. What role has the Scottish Parliament (including its committees) played in the situation?
5. Are there any other points you would like to make?

Question five was designed as a catch-all question to give respondents the opportunity to add anything else they wanted to mention. The interview questions were provided in writing (Appendix 3) to the elites at least two weeks in advance of the interview date.

The one-to-one interviews were conducted during the second half of 2006 and early 2007. Each respondent was interviewed at a place and time of their choosing as shown in Table 3. Of the fourteen, respondents K and L wanted to be interviewed together. All fourteen respondents were candid and cooperative.

Prior to the commencement of each interview, the respondent was asked:

- If they were still happy to be interviewed?
- If they were comfortable with the interview questions?
- If they were happy that I record the interview?

- If I could use extracts from their interview in my research?

None of the respondents:

- Refused to be interviewed.
- Said they were uncomfortable with the interview questions.
- Refused to have their interview recorded.
- Refused me permission to use extracts from their interview in my research.
- Had any unforeseen reactions.

Where appropriate, supplementary questions were also asked, with the respondent's consent, during the interview to develop or clarify a respondent's reply. Interviews took an average of ninety minutes. I also made field notes of the setting and context of the interviews, as illustrated by Appendix 13.

Access to official documents was also straightforward. Rich and on-the-record data from an official inquiry in to the West Lothian College case by the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee supplemented data from the interviews. Data was harvested from three official documents of the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee:

- *Section 22 Report, West Lothian College* (Scottish Parliament 2005a).
- Audit Committee transcript (Scottish Parliament 2005b)
- *College Finances*, Audit Committee report, (Scottish Parliament 2005c).

The data in these reports was used as if it were my own. It was treated and interrogated in the same manner as that for the elites' interviews. Content analysis of

these documents helped to establish facts, identify inferences, assumptions, values and priorities, or highlight differences in perceptions between this data and that of the respondents.

Data Analysis Strategy & Process

The data analysis strategy adopted consisted of the following five-steps informed by Marshall and Rossman (1989):

1. Data Organisation.
2. Generating Categories, Themes & Patterns.
3. Testing Emergent Data.
4. Seeking Alternative Explanations.
5. Writing the Report.

(Adapted from Marshall & Rossman 1989, p. 114)

The data analysis strategy required that the data in this research were reconstructed so that I could plausibly relate the particulars of the research story to others through a logical and seamless narrative (Constas 1992). However, in reconstructing the data, I fully acknowledge that it is different to the social reality of the interviews and official documents from which it was taken (Thornton 1988). The data would no longer be a raw, true, representation of the setting from which they were taken (Holliday 2001). However, leaving the data in its rawest possible form, as that is what is closest to its setting, was not considered by this researcher to be a viable option, as it would most likely make no sense to the reader, deny me a basis for my argument and question the very purpose of presenting it in the first instance (Holliday 2001). I am obliged to help the reader understand how the reconstruction of the data was done by explicitly showing my workings in that regard (Holliday

2001). I have sought to keep the process of data re-presentation as simple as possible by looking at the data and recording only what I have seen. The aim has been to support the validity of my analysis and to highlight the richness of the data (Chenail 1995, pp. 3-7). By my being open, the reader will know how I have collected the data and be able to see what I saw or, as a minimum, accept that my interpretation of the data was a valid one. In addition, by re-presenting a corpus of data, my intent has been to help the reader to see what they can see in my data.

Step One - Data Organisation

My methodological approach was designed to produce data that could be subjected to thematic analysis. The process I adopted to do this involved noticing, collecting and thinking about the data (Jorgenson 1989; Seidel 1998). A digital device was used to record each of the fourteen interviews and my EdD Supervisor had access to all of these recordings. The process of data analysis commenced with noticing. This required me to listen repeatedly to each of the fourteen interviews in order to become familiar with them. All of the interview talk from the interviews with Respondent E and Respondent G was transcribed (Appendix 9). The punctuation used in these transcripts, such as commas and full stops, were my interpretative approximations of the interviews. This process was invaluable as listening enabled me to get closer to and become more attuned to the interview talk and the answers of respondents. The two transcripts helped me in noticing what comprised the talk. In combination, they made me think more deeply about the data and engage in an initial analysis of it for key words and recurring themes. Appendix 9 shows one elite's responses to the interview questions analysed for key words and recurring themes. A brief extract from that appendix is shown below:

> The construction of PFI is a fixed deal and the only people that will suffer will be institutions. The PFI is constructed on the basis that if you get your student numbers or not, who cares? Because it's off the balance sheet and the host gets the money, you have the problems. And so therefore you've got policy dimensions here that don't relate but were never intended to relate.

Brief notes taken by myself during the course of the interviews supplemented each of the interviews. Such notes helped me as I listened to the talk of each interview by signposting me to where key words and recurring themes lay and to where new data had emerged from one interview compared with others. I also segregated the recordings into two different categories, comprising college and non-college respondents looking for differences in the likes of interpretation, viewpoints and priorities. This approach was both iterative and reflexive in that as the interview process progressed, I became more alert to the instances of key words and themes and more confident in my ability as a researcher to identify them. My ability to do so was due to a heightened awareness gained by a thorough review of the literature.

The data drawn from the three official documents of the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee was used as if it were my own. It was treated and interrogated in the same manner as that for the elites' interviews. Analysis of these documents allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of their content and helped to establish facts, identify inferences, assumptions, values and priorities, or highlight differences in perceptions between this data and that of the respondents.

From my breaking-up, separation and disassembly of the interview and documentary data into pieces (Strauss & Corbin 1990, p. 57), I identified key words and recurring themes as shown in Appendix 5. These atomised data were word processed to aid manipulation and were catalogued and displayed as shown in Appendices 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12.

Step Two – Generating Categories, Themes & Patterns

Having identified these 283 points of interest, my noticing went through a step change and in this next part of the process I began to give these points of interest descriptive names or codes (Strauss & Corbin 1990, pp. 63-116). My aim in developing these coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen 1992) was to enable simplification of the data. The review of policy implementation literature identified that there were no ideal pre-existing coding classifications available. This was overcome by using the constant comparison data analysis method (Glaser & Strauss 1967, pp. 102-103) and its variant category construction (Merriam 1998, p. 179) to develop the actual coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen 1992). First of all the categories were established, their properties defined and relationships between categories identified. The data were then broken down (Strauss & Corbin 1990) and assigned to these initial categories of conceptual constructs that had emerged from the data. Through category construction, data from the interviews with respondents and the documentary analysis were revisited a number of times in the search for comparisons of respondents' remarks, e.g. "no thought given to individual impacts as a result of policy change", "colleges in financial difficulty", "civil servants were responsible", "college had to be innovative". The result of this noticing process was 15, open, inductive coding categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990) as shown in

Appendix 6. The key words and recurring themes were then attributed to these 15 open coding categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990) as shown in Appendix 10.

Next I engaged in the gathering part of the process where I needed to put the data back together again but in new ways. This was to help aggregate the data in the open coding categories into more meaningful and comprehensible, higher order clusters. The first part of this gathering process led to the development of 5 axial codes (Strauss & Corbin 1990) informed by macro-level dimensions of policy network interaction (Appendix 7). The 15 open coding categories were then ascribed to these 5, macro-level, axial coding categories as shown in Appendix 11. In the final part of the gathering and aggregating process, I developed 4, selective coding (Strauss & Corbin 1990) categories of policy network theory as shown in Appendix 8. The 5 macro-level, axial coding categories were then ascribed to the 4 selective coding categories as shown in Appendix 12.

The data gathering and aggregating process discussed above is summarised in Figure 1. It shows the hierarchy of data starting with the key words and recurring themes and the aggregating up of that data, resulting finally in selective coding categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990) of policy network theory.

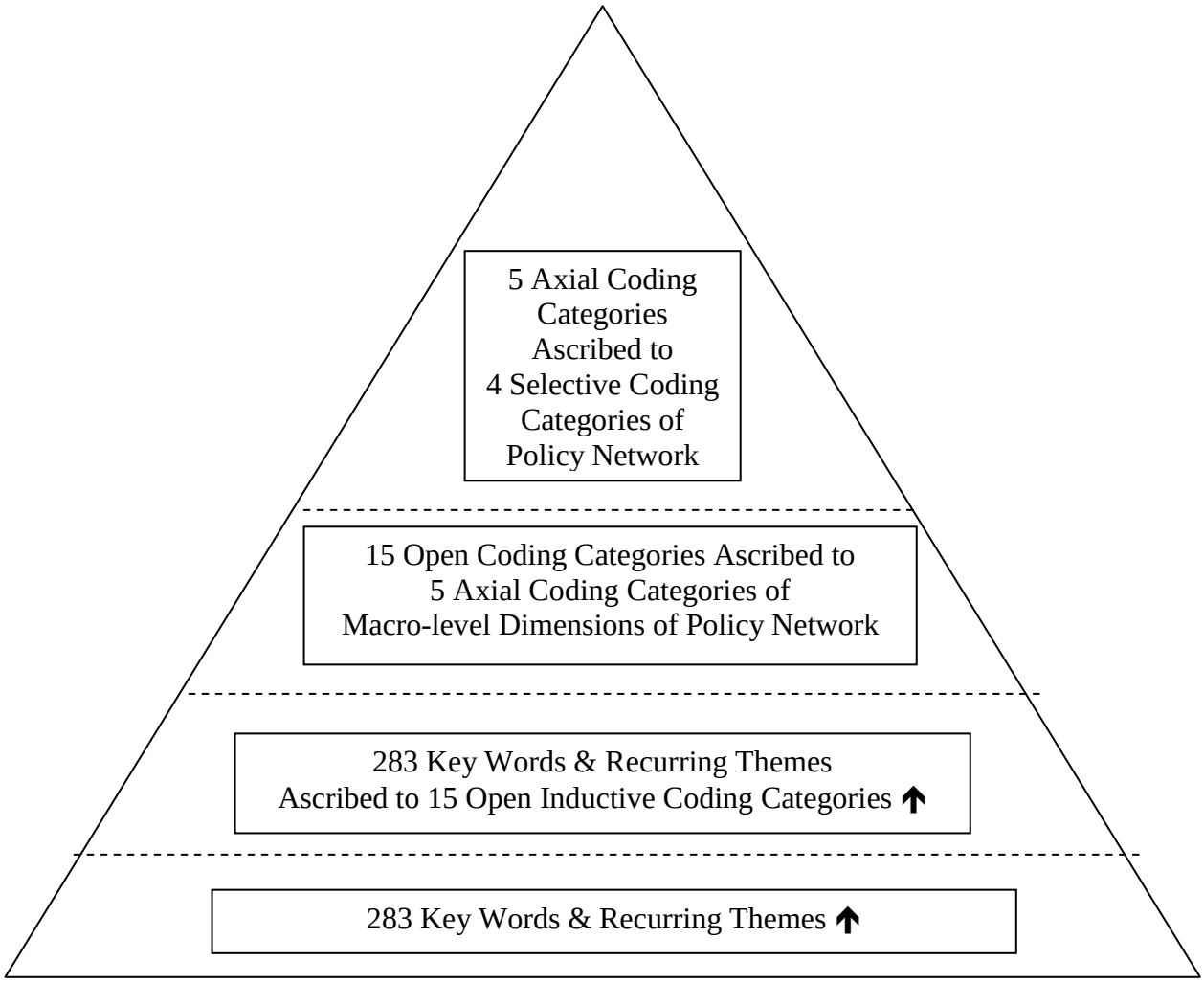

Figure 1
Data Gathering & Aggregating
Process & Hierarchy

The process of how a sample of the atomised data was put back together again in more meaningful and comprehensible higher order clusters is summarised in Table 6.

Key Words & Recurring Themes (SAMPLE)	**Open Inductive Category**	**Axial Coding Category Macro-Level Dimensions Of Policy Network Interaction**	**Selective Coding Categories Policy Network Theory**
• Devolution • Parliamentarians • Parliamentary committees • Post-1999 policies • Post-devolution policies • QUANGO • Scottish Executive • Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) • Scottish Funding Council (SFC) • Scottish issues • Scottish Office • Scottish Parliament • Scottish Parliament Audit Committee • Westminster-based policy • Westminster committees • Westminster Parliament	• Organising Perspective	• Organising Perspective	• Interdependence • Interests • Membership • Resources
➔	➔	➔	

Table 6
Simplification of Data Example

Step Three – Testing Emergent Concepts

Step three involved thinking about the data, testing the emergent data and the higher-level conceptual categories by evaluating them in relation to the purpose of the research and the research question(s). In this thinking part of the process I used 'a little bit of data and a lot of right brain' (Agar 1991, p. 194). By concentrating on a small bit of data, I was able to make the shift to more intensive analysis. I critically examined the points of interest I had collected and looked for patterns and relationships not only within but also across data clusters. I then made the data more comprehensible by reconstructing it through working back and forth between the parts and the whole of my data. This led me to make general discoveries about the phenomena of the West Lothian College case. I then linked these with illustrative quotations from respondents' discourse alongside my preliminary interpretations. The process was not simple or linear, nor did it instantly enable me to identify findings and conclusions. Instead, it was iterative, recursive and holographic (Seidel 1998). The process was iterative in that I would think over and over again about a piece of data and its relevance or significance. Such iteration became progressive in that while I was thinking about one piece of data, I began to notice other, newer points of relevance in the data and so my awareness, thinking and analysis also became more progressive and richer. This in turn resulted in multiple iterations, interpretations, categories and priorities. As my analysis progressed, themes were clarified and added to and then used as a tool to iteratively, progressively and recursively facilitate further discovery and exploration of the data. It was recursive (Yin 1994), in that having thought I had dealt with a piece of data and metaphorically put it in a box, another piece of data would prompt me to think more deeply about

what I thought I had dealt with. I would then add other new parts of data to it. My process was also holographic in that the different parts of the process i.e. noticing, collecting and thinking**,** contained all the information possessed by the whole process, enabling me to envision a 3-D image of the data and emergent concepts that brought both depth and clarity to the process (Seidel 1998). Consequently, the whole-in-every-part nature of the hologram provided me with an entirely new way of noticing and understanding the data, its organisation and order (Seidel 1998). An example of the above is when I considered the actors involved in the West Lothian College case as a point of interest and small bit of data. In the responses to interview questions given by one of the elites (Appendix 9), the respondent talks quite extensively about actors. Through my process of noticing, collecting and thinking, it became apparent that whilst this appeared to be an obvious and simple point of interest it was a rich, complex and interrelated source of data. The iterative, recursive and holographic all came into play and prompted many lines of inquiry. For example, when analysing the data about actors, many questions arose. What is an actor? Who were they? Were all actors present and represented? What were their interests and motives? What alliances were there between actors? Had they acted with good faith? Did they care? Did they have power and influence? Were they equal? Were they in authority? What part did they play in influencing and making decisions?

The higher-level conceptual categories were allocated to taxonomy through a process of selective coding (Strauss & Corbin 1990). The taxonomy (Appendix 8) allocated

the categories to the macro-level dimensions of policy network interaction identified by policy network theory (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a).

Step Four – Seeking Alternative Explanations

Step four demanded a critical re-examination of my own pre-conceived ideas and prejudices in recognition of the intimate involvement I had with the case. This required me to 'engage in the critical act of challenging the very pattern that seems so apparent' (Marshall & Rossman 1995, p. 116). I sought to be a reflexive practitioner throughout this research by conceptualising validity as a conscious self-understanding of my research process (Hammersley & Atkinson1995). As stated earlier in this discussion, I have, through my data analysis strategy and in the writing-up and presentation of my findings, sought to manage the movement between my observations and theory in a way that is valid to me as the researcher and not just a demonstration of validity to my audience (Wainwright 1997). That strategy served me well as an inexperienced researcher. It made me think about the research cycle with greater clarity and in a more informed way. This has been particularly so with regard to the interconnectedness of the various stages in the research cycle and continually linking this with my research question and sub-questions.

Step Five – Writing the Report

Qualitative data is, by nature, rich in description and the thematic structure I have developed in the Findings Chapter provided a useful framework within which I could effectively apply 'explanation-building' (Yin 1994, pp. 100-113), 'discursive commentary' (Holliday 2001, p. 99) and 'thick description' (Geertz 1973).

Explanation-building (Yin 1994) has been used to explain the West Lothian College case by stipulating a set of causal links about it (Yin 1994). Such links include the interplay between policies, the shift to a devolved model of government and subsequent policy-making, changes in policy network actors, the arrival and impact of a funding council and macro structural issues such as changes in national participation rates for further education. That leads to explanations of events, actions and behaviours considered pivotal to the case.

Discursive commentary allows the researcher to talk about the data within the context of their argument (Holliday 2001). It involves saying what the data means, how the data connects and in what way the data is significant (Holliday 2001). Discursive commentary is given a key role in the Findings Chapter to tell the reader in what way the extracted data provides evidence to support my arguments. I believe that it is imperative that the data extract is not simply shown and then left to speak for itself. I have a responsibility to tell the reader what I believe the data extract to be saying and what I believe it contributes to the argument (Golden-Biddle & Locke 1997). In this way, I have been able to involve the respondents in the research and to let their voices be heard. It is their own views about the West Lothian College case, the strength of their views and depth of feeling, and the value of what they said that

is to be found throughout the Findings Chapter. To achieve this, I have used selected, short, relevant, illustrative quotations from respondents' discourse and descriptions to convey the meaning of my data, my understanding of it and the points I had made about it through the themes presented. I have brought each extract of data into the text to work for my argument. The work of Chenail (1995) was useful when re-presenting the data in the Findings Chapter. Specifically, Chenail's (1995) organising principles employ 'juxtaposition' (Chenail 1995, pp. 3-7), where the data, relevant to each theme, are juxtaposed with talk about the data and also by weaving in literature from the particular discourse (Chenail 1995, pp. 3-7). In structuring the data re-presentation for this piece of research, the following pattern, adapted from Chenail (1995, pp. 3-7), has been used to display the findings and data exemplars:

- Theme heading -
    - Present the finding.
    - Introduce the first data exemplar of this finding.
    - Display the first data exemplar of this finding.
    - Comment further on the first data exemplar of this finding.
- Make transition to second data exemplar of this finding -
    - Display the second data exemplar of this finding.
    - Comment further on the second data exemplar of this finding.
- Make transition to the next data exemplar of this finding –
    - Repeat the pattern until the closing of this theme.

(Adapted from Chenail 1995, pp. 3-7)

Further, and in keeping with the work of Chenail (1995), literature from the discourse on public policy implementation and policy networks has also been included, as further evidence, to complement the data extracts. This sequence between argument, commentary and data is repeated throughout the Findings Chapter. I believe that by triangulating the data in this way, the validation of my observations is aided (Chenail 1995, pp. 3-7).

'Thick description' (Geertz 1973) is one way of achieving external validity. This is the ability to generalise the results of research to other settings (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In the writing-up of this research I have sought to use thick description to help my reader assess the external validity of my data. I have used it to show how the data interconnects and represents the social setting from which it was taken and to help the reader judge my interpretation of it (Holliday 2001). I believe that these combined approaches describe and contextualise the phenomenon of the West Lothian College case in sufficient detail so that the reader can begin to evaluate the extent to which the findings proposed are transferable to other times, settings, situations and people (Holloway 1997), while offering a clear and purposive focus on the phenomena that was the West Lothian College case. It is in this way that I have sought to 'share the wealth' (Chenail 1994) of my research and to invite others, who might follow after me, to step into my shoes and continue the inquiry and conversation.

Indigenous Insider

My positionality as researcher in this study was that of an ‘indigenous insider’ (Banks 1998, p. 8), as I ‘belonged’ to the field of research and believe I was perceived as such by the participants. I found such a term a useful depiction of how, as a practitioner active in both the network and case under examination, I conducted this study. While it is accepted in the traditional research paradigm of positivism, taken here to mean ‘natural science as the paradigm of human knowledge’ (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 8), that the role of an ideal 'value-free' and 'objective' researcher is fundamental (Holian & Brooks 2004), my being an insider was an advantage (Holian & Brooks 2004). I had exclusive knowledge of the process, privileged access and intimate knowledge that an outsider would have been unable to access (Holian & Brooks 2004). Such advantage allowed me to see things quite differently to an outsider (Merriam *et al* 2001, p. 411). It helped me ask more meaningful research and interview questions, read non-verbal cues in interviews and allowed me to project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the study and its issues (Merriam *et al* 2001, p. 411). An example of this is that when the matter of financial difficulties was first formally raised by the college, the funding council seemed to be ignorant of the basis of the college’s PFI business case. Initially, officials did not want to hear about them and were very quick to lay the blame for such difficulties at the college’s door. That, along with a great deal of other insider knowledge, helped me frame the study’s research questions (Holian & Brooks 2004). First of all it was used to develop the broad central cause and effect main research question in a way that would explore the complex set of factors surrounding implementation in the case of the West Lothian College. It was then used to develop

the exploratory sub-questions that narrowed the focus of the study onto more specific implementation issues. My knowledge was also used to develop the probing interview questions to allow the varied perspectives of key participants to be heard. How my insider knowledge benefitted the data collected and my interpretation of the research findings (Merriam *et al* 2001) is discussed in the results chapter.

Being an insider helped in terms of access to participants as all knew of me in my professional capacity and I knew them (Merriam *et al* 2001; Holian & Brooks 2004). Also I never had any reason to think that I was not regarded as credible by any of the participants either as a researcher or in my better-known professional capacity (Holian & Brooks 2004). I believe that the role of and the relationship between the researcher and the participants have the potential to impact on the validity and legitimacy of the data collected. Given my own epistemological perspectives and ontological position, it was impossible to claim that my research was value-free and decontextualised. I was in the privileged position of being close to and socialised in the relevant networks through my professional lived experience and could speak with authority about them (Banks 1998, p. 8). I also had a shared identity with the study's elite respondents and a shared experience of the West Lothian College case. My closeness to and familiarity with a mainly closed network and the selected organisational and political elites was a position of considerable strength. Closeness provided me with a methodological advantage (Banks 1998), in that positionally, I had equality with the respondents and was well placed to observe and interpret situations and events. In contrast, an outsider researcher would not have had such advantage. It was with the benefit of such insights that I formulated, developed and

implemented a robust research design, in which the voices of participants were paramount. The above should not be interpreted as suggesting that this research endeavour was easily accomplished. It is simply to recognise the advantage I had. It also has to be to be acknowledged that it is simply not tenable for an insider researcher such as me to claim that I had approached the research free of any pre-conceived ideas, as previously acknowledged in earlier discussion in this chapter.

As a reflexive practitioner I recognised that while I was advantaged by closeness, it was also a potential weakness in that the obvious might not be asked, assumptions might be made about what I knew, assumptions might not be challenged and sensitive topics might not be raised. These may lead to questionable practices in the use, selection, manipulation and interpretation of data (Malcolm 1993). To counter these possibilities and heighten my awareness of them, I adopted a dialectal perspective (Aguilar 1981) and alternated between being an insider an outsider in order to look both inside and out. This helped me "get out of my own head" and critically reflect on the research process and my interactions (Aguilar 1981). It was in these ways that I sought to achieve simultaneously the necessary involvement and detachment in my research endeavours. The public evidence of whether I managed this is shown in this thesis and is for others to judge.

While researching in my own workplace and other settings that I was familiar with gave me an advantage, I also recognised that closeness was also a danger in seeking to maintain a detached stance. Given my role as a senior manager at my place of work, I came to this research with my own values and beliefs and recognise that these may impinge on my research, be difficult to separate out from research and

interview questions and my interpretation of the data (Appleby 2013, p. 13). It may also be challenging to remain completely objective when interpreting the data (Appleby 2013, p. 13). Given that backcloth, I needed to establish a critical distance, so that I could remain detached and objective in the research process. In doing so, I knew that whatever the stage the research process was at, I had to maintain a critical eye and question what had happened and why in order to develop more sophisticated explanatory insights to the case. Guided by the literature, I adopted reflexivity as a way of addressing these challenges.

Ethics & Power Relationships

The literature recognises that it is not possible to anticipate all potential ethical issues or decide what is or is not appropriate researcher conduct. It also recognises that power is a dimension of ethics and one that can impact practically on specific research methods, such as elite interviewing. As an inexperienced researcher, who was also the main research instrument and also someone who had been intimately involved in the research topic as an agent of change, I determined that I would develop an individual code of ethical practice to guide me in my role as a researcher. This was informed by consideration of the British Educational Research Association guidelines (2004) and a review of the literature on ethics. The code used is shown below:

- Fully disclose my identity, interest and involvement.
- At the start fully explain to participants the purpose and procedures of the research.
- Look at ethical consequences from the viewpoint of the participants and institutions.

- Determine if participants will benefit from the research.
- Make sure the research will not harm the participants.
- Anticipate the eventuality of controversial findings and handle these sensitively.
- Conduct objective research by being clear about the design, conduct and reporting of the research.
- Seek informed consent from participants and in writing if desirable.
- Make it clear that participants have the right to refuse and withdraw at any time.
- Feedback to participants if they request it.
- Observe and respect the dignity, privacy and interests of participants and guarantee non-traceability.
- Deceit to be used only when completely necessary.
- If ethical dilemmas arise consult research supervisor.

(Adapted from Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000, p. 71)

I found the code to be a useful guide that helped me anticipate potential ethical considerations and dilemmas surrounding the research topic. It served me well in conducting the actual research and with particular regard to the type of power relationships that can exist between the researcher and the participants when interviewing organisational and governmental elites. This raised interesting issues about how the participants perceived me as a researcher and how that role determines the type of power relationships that can exist between the researcher and the participants. While the notion of 'power' was more fully discussed in the literature

review chapter, it is useful to acknowledge here that power is inevitable and that it is not possible to reach a situation where power is not being exercised. Where the researcher is interviewing less powerful groups, the researcher may find himself/herself in a position of power. However, in an elite interview, the situation may well be reversed and the researcher needs to be alert to this possibility and the ethical issues that can surface. One example from my own research (Appendix 13) was when two elite respondents were interviewed together at their request. My perception of the power play was that both had clearly determined that they would manage the interview. This was done by starting it late, ending it early, deciding in advance who would take the lead in answering questions, giving very cautious answers to the previously circulated interview questions and frequently defaulting to documentary evidence. Nevertheless, it was still possible to obtain useful data from the interview.

Summary

This chapter presented the research philosophy, design, methodology and methods to achieve the research aim and answer the research questions as unambiguously and convincingly as possible. My insider researcher role was made explicit as was the knowledge I brought that informed the key questions of the research. The rationale that matched the research questions with the design was explained. Criticisms regarding validity, reliability and generalisability were addressed by an appropriate and robust research design, careful preparation and thorough analytical procedures. The reasons for the limitations of the study were made clear. The practical arrangements for the operationalisation of the research recounted case selection, identifying suitable respondents for the study, access, anonymity, confidentiality and

ethical considerations. The procedures for data analysis were detailed. Finally, the means of reporting the research and its audiences were identified. In combination all these elements were critical to the validity of the findings and the utility of the research.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the principal findings of my research, which is situated in the public policy implementation literature and is aimed at understanding policy implementation. It follows on from the work of Rhodes (1997a, p. 8), and in particular the concept of 'policy networks' as a mode of governance (Rhodes 1997b). Changing governance structures (Rhodes 2005) make such a study timely, given the importance of the concept of governance (Hill & Hupe 2009) and a shift in structures from only vertical command and control means and ends of policy steering towards governance settings that are more horizontal or differentiated (Hill & Hupe 2009).

Showing My Workings

Before discussing the findings, there follows a brief discussion about the need for researchers to 'show the workings' (Holliday 2001, p. 47) of their research and how I believe I have done that. Showing the workings, or infrastructure, of my research means showing what I did, what the study did and how the research achieved what it did (Holliday 2001, p. 47). It is a basic, yet significant feature of qualitative research and is a central element in achieving rigour, accountability and validity (Holliday 2001, p. 47). In attempting to show the workings of this research, I have drawn upon the work of Seidel (1998) and Holliday (2001) to aid me in framing a robust explanation. The awareness I had developed since engaging in this research helped me realise that the workings of my research evolved from a deliberate and structured, non-linear process that was built on a firm foundation of noticing, collecting and thinking (Seidel 1998) about points of interest that were relevant to my field of research. More specifically, these points of interest were interrelated and included what I had read from the public policy implementation literature, the concept and

theory of policy networks, the terminology of policy networks, official documents, the actuality of the events surrounding the West Lothian College case and the remarks of selected organisational and political elites respondents. I am now aware that I had actually been doing these things even before I started my formal research in to the West Lothian College case. Because of the way I had coded my data and then combined that with the process of noticing, collecting and thinking, I was able to see golden threads through the data and ultimately find the answers in my data. Showing the workings of research is similar to doing maths, in that it is not enough just to get the right answer. How the answer was reached and the steps taken to get there are as important and need to be shown to the reader in a clear and appropriate manner. The same discipline applies to the writing process adopted by the qualitative researcher. This means showing how, through the writing-up process, the overall research strategy was appropriate to the social setting and what the relationship was between the researcher and the subject of the research. Showing the workings of my research is discussed more fully in the final chapter where I reflect on the methods of my research.

Findings & Insider Knowledge

Before discussing the findings, there follows a brief discussion about the findings and insider knowledge. In the Methodology Chapter, my insider researcher role was made explicit. I believe that the benefit of my insider knowledge in relation to the findings was generally beneficial in that it enhanced the conceptual breadth and depth of my analysis and interpretation of findings (Holian & Brooks 2004). I had privileged access to knowledge and information about the policy networks, organisations and actors who had been involved. I knew their involvement, their motivations and about the politics, both large and small, that had been at play. I had I intimate knowledge of

the college's commercial-in-confidence business case, its critical dependence on funded student growth and the nervousness of the college's board and management about that as a way to pay for the PFI. My knowledge extended to what went on behind the scenes. This included detailed commercial-in-confidence exchanges between government ministers, senior civil servants, the private sector, the college's board and its management. Such exchanges were on significant issues like student growth projections and funding, project financing, risk transfer, pay back. My knowledge includes knowing that when the likelihood of financial difficulties was first raised by the college, the then funding council seemed to be ignorant of the basis of the college's business case, initially did not want to hear about it and laid the blame at the college's door. My knowledge also extended to knowing that in ultimately seeking to resolve the situation, Scottish government ministers recognised there was a problem, but did not want to be seen to be critical of UK government policy. I believe that this knowledge allowed me to project a more truthful, authentic understanding of the case (Merriam *et al* 2001). However, to guard against bias, I used a range of tools such as multiple sources of evidence and methods of data collection, keeping field notes, an audit trail of evidence, review of a draft case study report and a constant process of reflexive awareness. These helped me develop more sophisticated explanatory insights to the case.

Research Question

Before presenting the detailed findings, it is useful to be reminded of what the main research question was:

> *How and why did the interplay of three, seemingly unrelated, public policies result in policy mess and unintended consequence in the case of West Lothian College?*

Sub Questions

The study also sought to provide answers to the main question by answering the following sub questions:

1. *What were the intended policy goals?*
2. *How and why did the implementation of one policy undermine the implementation of another?*
3. *What was the process by which this came about?*
4. *What part did changes in organising perspective, policy networks and actors play in the process?*
5. *What was the effect of this policy mess and unintended consequence for the different actors?*
6. *What policy learning and change arose as a result?*

Data Re-Presentation

The presentation of the findings is oriented very specifically to the primary research question and sub questions that have driven this research. In mobilising and re-presenting the data, the principal findings have been structured around the research questions. The data extracts cited in support of my findings have been drawn from two sources. The first was a Scottish Parliament Audit Committee inquiry (Scottish Parliament, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c), which considered the *Section 22* Report (Scottish Parliament 2005a) by the Auditor General for Scotland on the 2003-04 Audit of West Lothian College and its financial difficulties. To enable the reader to contextualise and assess the validity of these re-presented extracts in relation to my arguments, the name of the inquiry document is given, followed by the column number from which the data extract was harvested. The second source drew upon selected direct quotations of respondents, harvested from the interviews conducted with the organisational and political elites who had an intimate involvement with the case. To enable the reader to contextualise and assess the validity of these re-presented extracts in relation to my arguments, they are referenced by indicating the code attributed to each respondent. The findings are also grounded in theory by reference to the literature.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:
HOW AND WHY DID THE INTERPLAY OF THREE, SEEMINGLY UNRELATED, PUBLIC POLICIES RESULT IN POLICY MESS AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE IN THE CASE OF WEST LOTHIAN COLLEGE?

- UK government macro-economic interests, an insecure funding stream and sector-level financial instability were all factors in the interplay.
- Interplay of policies happened through causal relationships being formed after their implementation.
- Interplay both supported and undermined the effectiveness of the PFI policy.
- The Competitiveness and Growth policy positively supported the effectiveness of the PFI policy.
- The interplay of the Consolidation and Collaboration policy negatively affected the effectiveness of the PFI policy.
- Causal relationships formed between policies were the result of top-down decisions made by central policy-makers.
- Interplay resulted in a unique situation for the West Lothian College relative to the estates norm in the sector.
- A third order policy change brought a fundamental shift in the sector's funding policy and contributed to policy mess and an unintended consequence.
- The impact of that policy change on a college operating under a PFI on the basis of increasing student numbers had not been recognised.
- Steering, power and power-dependence all played a part in the interplay of policies, the policy mess and unintended consequences.
- The process of interplay was a messy one.
- In the interplay of policies there was no continuity in actors, little interest on the part of some actors, vested self-interests by others, while others didn't care.

Box 1. Key Findings Main Research Question

FINDINGS

Interplay: Macro-economics, Insecure Funding Stream & Sector Level Financial Instability

The findings here show that UK government macro-economic interests, an insecure funding stream and sector-level financial instability were all factors in the interplay (Young 2002; Urwin & Jordan 2008) that resulted in policy mess and unintended consequence. The UK government's macro-economic interests contributed to the interplay and brought the PFI into it. The findings show that "the balance sheet of government at macro-economic level" (Respondent E) meant that the capital required

for a new West Lothian College campus was "not in the Block grant" (Respondent G) of the Scottish Office. The second finding shows that another contributing factor was concern over how secure the Competitiveness and Growth policy was as a funding stream for the college's PFI payments. For the private sector actor, that had been a concern "all the way back to when the contract was being negotiated" (Respondent M) and "to letters of comfort" (Respondent M) discussions with government. This was because that funding stream was "less secure" (Respondent M) than that of "primary or secondary education" (Respondent M) and the college's funding stream was "a perfect example" of that (Respondent M). The final contributing factor in the interplay was the sector's financial insecurity. That led to the Consolidation and Collaboration policy and capped student activity levels, meaning the college would be unable to "fund the PFI based on current activity" (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 6-7).

Interplay: Causal Relationships

These findings show how the interplay of the three unrelated policies resulted in policy mess and an unintended consequence (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Grantham 2001); particularly at the level of the West Lothian College. They show that the principal way in which interplay happened was through causal relationships being formed after their implementation (Young 2002; Oberthür & Gehring 2006, cited in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 181; Urwin & Jordan 2008). The findings show that the two funding policies affected the effectiveness of the PFI policy (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, cited in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 181). In the first instance they show that the Competitiveness and Growth policy was how the college would pay for the PFI campus (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 5-6). That positively supported the effectiveness of the PFI policy as "the PFI deal was based on agreed assumptions

about funded growth in student activity." (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 5-6). In the second instance the findings show that the Consolidation and Collaboration policy capped student activity levels, meaning the college would be unable to "fund the PFI based on current activity" (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 6-7). This suggests that interplay in this instance was negative as it undermined the effectiveness of the PFI policy. No evidence was found to show that interplay between these policies had been considered when each of the policies had been formulated by central policy-makers.

Causal Relationships Decided by Central Policy-makers

The findings here show that in the process of interplay, the causal relationships formed between the policies were the result of top-down decisions made by central policy-makers (Hill & Hupe 2002). The first finding shows that the Scottish Office had decided that the PFI was the vehicle by which a new campus would be procured for the West Lothian College (PFI Scotland 2001; Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 6). The second finding shows that the Scottish Office also decided that the way in which the PFI would be paid for by the college was through the college growing its student activity levels (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). It also shows that the Scottish Office decided this growth was to be rewarded through an income stream coming from the policy of Growth and Competiveness (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The third finding shows that the Scottish Executive then decided to end that policy of growth and, as a consequence, the PFI income stream (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The fourth finding shows that the Scottish Executive then decided that there would be a policy of Consolidation and Collaboration, which capped college student activity levels (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

West Lothian College: Unique Situation

The findings here show that the interplay of policies resulted in the West Lothian College being put in a unique situation. The findings reveal that the process resulted in the college's estate situation being unique relative to the norm of college estates in Scotland. It was unique in being the only wholly-replacement further education college campus in Scotland procured through the PFI (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1199, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college's estate was unique in being in private not public ownership (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college itself was unique in paying £97 million over 25-years to use the estate (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college was also unique in getting a £43 million commitment from the Funding Council to support the PFI contract payments (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1199; Annexe B, Written Evidence). For a senior Funding Council executive, the West Lothian College's situation was "quite different from the situation the other colleges in the sector found themselves in" (Respondent L). For a board member respondent, the college's estates costs were different to other colleges because "so much of our income needs to go against charges that are disproportionate to other colleges" (Respondent A). For a college senior management respondent the "funding streams from the funding council that support the PFI are different to other colleges" (Respondent J).

Third Order Policy Change

The findings here reveal why interplay resulted in policy mess and an unintended consequence (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Grantham 2001); particularly at the level of the West Lothian College. They show that a substantive reason was a third order change in the underlying policy goal (Hall 1993) of the sector's funding. The findings show that the status quo of the prevailing policy goal of Competitiveness and Growth

had been undermined and discredited (Hall 1993) as it had caused "unfettered, essentially damaging, competitive growth." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231) and that "only one college in 46 was in good financial health." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1235). This led to a third order change and fundamental shift in the sector's funding policy away from the prevailing policy of growth in student activity levels, to consolidation of student activity levels. The findings show the underlying goal of the new policy of Consolidation and Collaboration was to stabilise that "parlous" financial health (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231). This placed a sector-wide cap on the level of student activity that each college was funded for (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). For the former senior civil servant respondent the cap was "the fairest thing to do" (Respondent F) and "the general feeling was the cap would create stability in the system and create the conditions in which financial recovery would be more likely" (Respondent F).

Policy Change: No Recognition of Local Impact

The findings here show that in the adoption of the new Consolidation and Collaboration policy and the application of the activity cap, no consideration had been given by policymakers to its impact on the West Lothian College PFI. They show that the decision to adopt and implement the new funding policy and goal had been decided centrally by Scottish Executive ministers (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1230). The findings show that while one of the Audit Committee's members understood the "logic" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1235) of the decision to consolidate student activity, they questioned whether the impact had been recognised. Did the funding council and government "recognise at the time, the impact that it would have on a college that was operating under a PFI on the basis of increasing student numbers?" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1235). The response given by the

senior civil servant witness suggested that there had been no recognition of that impact. Instead they show that the decision "was taken at sector level, not on account of any individual college." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1236-1237). For one interview respondent while respecting policy decisions made "at a Scottish-wide level" (Respondent O), the respondent thought it was important for those making such decisions to "recognise the knock-on effect to others".

Steering, Power, & Power-dependence

The findings here show that steering (Rhodes 1997a), power (Lukes 1974, 2005) and power-dependence (Rhodes 1997a) all played a part in the interplay of policies, the policy mess and unintended consequences. Government utilised policy networks to steer public and private actors in the networks, shape expectations, generate collective action and adopt its preferred policy positions over time (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The three dimensions of power (Lukes 1974, 2005) were exercised by government through different means. Decision-making power was evidenced by central policy-makers making top-down policy decisions, such as the policy of the PFI and the funding policies of the college sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Non-decision making power was evidenced by college principals supporting government's goal of financial security for the sector (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228). Preference-shaping was evidenced by the PFI being seen by the college as "the only game in town" (Respondent G), "the only mechanism available to us" (Respondent C) and "the only option" (Respondent C). Power-dependence was evidenced through resources being bargained and exchanged to achieve actors' goals (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). One instance is that for government to achieve its further education policy goals it

was dependent on colleges to implement them who in turn were dependent on public funding (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

A Messy Process

The findings here show that the process that led to interplay between policies was a messy one (Jordan 1995) and was not handled throughout by one or the same policy network, actor or organising perspective (Rhodes 1997a). As evidence submitted to the Scottish Parliament and its Audit Committee shows, four different policy community types of networks were involved in the process over a period of more than a decade with each involved in different phases of the process (Scottish Parliament 1999; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). That evidence shows that over the same period a wide range of different policy actors were also involved. These included UK Governments, the Scottish Executive, government ministers, politicians, civil servants, college employer body executives, college senior managers, college governors, quango executives, private sector executives and consultants (Scottish Parliament, 2005b, col. 1198, col. 1223, col. 1224, col. 1228, 1230; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Devolution in Scotland also brought a new network and new actors into the process. The change to a devolved organising perspective in Scotland also brought a new network where responsibility for the statutory duty for further education shifted from government to the funding council quango that operated at 'arm's length' from elected policymakers and was administratively separate from government.

Interplay: Actors - No Continuity, Little Interest, Vested Self-interests, Didn't Care

The findings here concern central policy-makers and implementation actors involved in the interplay of policies, the policy mess and unintended consequences. They reveal that there was no continuity in actors, little interest on the part of some actors,

vested self-interests by others, while others didn't care. Evidence in support of these findings came from the views of respondents. They show that there had been "Too many ministers" (Respondent G) involved in the process and they had "not been particularly supportive about resolving the PFI issue". This "had not been helped by changes in ministers" (Respondent A) resulting in "no continuity" (Respondent A). Civil servants had been in "the 'no me' brigade", serving their "vested self-interests" and their "own minister" (Respondent I). The college got "caught-up in keeping the civil servants happy and on side", while "having to facilitate discussions between government departments that disagreed with each other" (Respondent I). Civil servants "were worse than useless", had "changed their mind" and "dragged their feet" (Respondent C) during the process. Funding Council officials "Had no clue" (Respondent D) and "No understanding" (Respondent G) when it was shown that the activity cap "had a negative effect on the college" (Respondent D). Officials "did not care" (Respondent D) about the effect and the "West Lothian College was seen as a problem college" (Respondent G).

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 1:
WHAT WERE THE INTENDED POLICY GOALS?

- Each of the three public policies had a formal, stated and intended policy goal.
- Goals were implemented at UK, sector and/or local level.
- Goals were top-down, policy-centred and represented policy-makers' views.
- There was compliance with policy goals.
- These goals saw the techniques and practices of the NPM applied to the college sector.
- Policy goals were contested by some respondents.
- Existence of a formal policy of growth was questioned.
- The entire orientation of one policy goal changed.
- The intended and stated PFI policy goal was realised.
- The intended and stated growth policy goal was realised.
- There was optimism about realising the intended and stated policy goal of consolidation.

Box 2. Key Findings Sub-research Question 1

FINDINGS

Formal, Stated & Intended Goals

The findings show that each of the three public policies identified in the case study had a formal policy goal. The PFI policy was formally announced by the Westminster government in 1992 and had the stated and intended goal of "increasing private sector involvement in the provision of public services' (HC Deb 12 November 1992, col. 998; House of Commons 2001, p. 10) across the UK. The policy's principal function was to renew increasingly obsolete public infrastructure, whilst maintaining a tight fiscal stance by using a form of spending that did not add to the PSBR. The Competitiveness and Growth policy was formally announced by the Scottish Office in 1993 with the stated and intended goal to 'reward efficiency and quality of provision' (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5) in the funding of the further education sector in Scotland (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1202-1205, col. 1230-1231; Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The policy's principal function was to have colleges compete for students, to grow student activity levels and deliver

efficiency savings at sector level. The Consolidation and Collaboration policy was formally announced by the Scottish Executive in 2002 with the stated and intended goal to consolidate further education student activity levels and have greater collaboration between colleges in the further education sector in Scotland (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1202-1205, col. 1230-1231; Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The policy's principal function was to stabilise the sector's then parlous financial health.

Goals Implemented

In each instance government's statements of intent were followed through and each of the goals was implemented through interaction between government and target groups, such as public and private actors (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973; Hogwood & Gunn 1984). These actors took actions (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973) to accomplish the stated goals and resources were also mobilised (Hogwood & Gunn 1984). In the instance of the PFI, the goal was implemented at both a UK level and at the local level of the West Lothian College, while the further education funding goals were implemented at both a Scotland-wide sector level and the local level of the West Lothian College. There was also evidence of a will (Matland 1995) on the part of actors that the policy goals be accomplished. One example is that the West Lothian College Board of Management, its senior managers and the private sector partner wanted the goal of the PFI be accomplished as that would result in the outcome of a new campus. Another example is that colleges actively competed with each other for students and growth (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231). A final example is that college principals supported the goal of government and the funding council to achieve financial security for the sector (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228).

Top-down, Policy-centred Goals

Each of the three policy goals were top-down and policy-centred as they represented central government policy-makers' views (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975; Sabatier & Mazmanian 1979, 1980). Competitiveness and Growth was 'owned' (Greenaway *et al* 2004) and driven by the then Westminster government's Scottish Office and administered by the Scottish Education Department. Consolidation and Collaboration was 'owned' (Greenaway *et al* 2004) and driven by the devolved Scottish Executive and its Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department and administered by the then SFEC. The PFI policy goal was also top-down and was an over-arching policy goal as it had been applied across all UK government spending departments. It was not 'owned' as such by any one government department (Greenaway *et al* 2004). Instead HM Treasury provided UK-wide institutional leadership for the policy, while also being the driver and enforcer of it. In the West Lothian College PFI project that institutional leadership was exercised through policy and technical guidance from HM Treasury via the Private Finance Unit embedded within the then Scottish Office (Greenaway *et al* 2004).

Compliance with Policy Goals

The findings here show examples of compliance with these top-down policy goals by target groups (Mazmanian & Sabatier 1983, pp. 20-21; Matland 1995). Compliance with the goal of the PFI saw the private sector design, build, finance and operate (DBFO) infrastructure and facilities informed by output specifications determined by public sector managers and organisations (House of Commons 2001, p. 10). At the local level of the West Lothian College, such compliance saw the private sector design, build, finance and operate the new Livingston Campus, informed by output specifications for the infrastructure and facilities management service that had been

determined by the college's senior managers. Compliance by colleges with the sector-level Competitiveness and Growth policy goal was indicated by "huge competition among colleges to get extra numbers in" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231). Compliance by colleges with the sector-level Consolidation and Collaboration policy goal was indicated by more colleges being financially secure. This was evidenced by the Chief Executive of the Funding Council who advised the Audit Committee that "I am cautiously optimistic that when we get to our target date at the end of next year [2006], all colleges will be financially secure or very nearly so." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1229).

Contestable Goals

The findings here show that some respondents felt that the two further education funding policy goals were in conflict with the local setting and context of the West Lothian College (Matland 1995). While government had obliged the college as a local service deliverer to comply (Matland 1995) with the policy goal of Competitiveness and Growth, this was, for one board respondent, "in conflict" (Respondent B) with what was happening on the ground. That conflict was described thus: "during the period when there was funded student growth, as far as West Lothian was concerned, the giant problem we had then was trying to generate and boost demand" (Respondent B). Government knew "we had falling numbers" and that the college was "on the wrong end of funded growth" (Respondent B). Another board respondent observed that while it was recognised there was "unfettered growth", "the college was not in a position to take advantage of it" (Respondent A). For a college senior manager, not being able to take advantage of growth made the college unequal when compared to other colleges, as people were "travelling elsewhere to better facilities" (Respondent I) and as a result "the college's starting

point for growth was lower than it could have been" (Respondent I). The second contestable area was the policy goal of Consolidation and Collaboration. One MSP respondent disputed the need for such a goal to address the financial difficulties of some colleges. While acknowledging that "the department may have looked at the broader picture and decided this is the policy initiative we must take", it was still something the respondent "would dispute" (Respondent O), as this had created "particular difficulties for one or two colleges and West Lothian is clearly one of them" [sic] (Respondent O).

Funded Growth: Formal Policy?

Two respondents questioned whether funded growth had actually been a formal policy at all. The college-sector body respondent cautioned, "Don't assume there was a [funding] policy" (Respondent D), observing that the sector's funding was more to do with there being "a lack of understanding" (Respondent D) about the way in which the sector was funded and how that funding was ultimately allocated to colleges. The system, process and allocation of funding were described as "a dark art, out of public sight and at best four people in Scotland understood how it worked" (Respondent D) and to have "hidden incongruities and discontinuities" (Respondent D). These were attributed to the policy instrument of formula funding, itself considered flawed because it was "so disaggregated" and "disengaged from reality" (Respondent D) and what was actually happening at the level of colleges. For the same respondent "this disengagement was inherent in the [funding] system" (Respondent D). A senior college manager had similar views and was "not sure that funded growth was a policy" (Respondent J), suggesting that growth "was an accident" (Respondent J). The respondent's reasoning was that while growth was something politicians had wanted in 1993, it only became formal policy in 1995. Even then that was only "once

there was clear demonstrable growth in the sector" (Respondent J). For the same respondent, it only became a policy because "growth was something that was already happening in the sector" (Respondent J).

PFI Policy Goal Realised

The findings here point to the PFI policy goal being realised in the context of the rebuilding of the West Lothian College. They show that a DBFO form of PFI provided the new infrastructure of the Livingston campus (PFI Scotland 2000). Audit Committee witnesses were positive about that outcome. The college's Principal felt the "PFI procurement route has given West Lothian a first rate college" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1202). The Chair of the college's board reinforced this, stating that "we used to have a college that nobody would come to and we now have an attractive college that is capable of serving the needs of people in West Lothian." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1203). Interview respondents echoed that tone. The PFI "was successful" and had provided "excellent facilities" (Respondent O). "The good result" (Respondent N) is "that we do have a new college in West Lothian" (Respondent N) and that without PFI "it is more than possible we would not have had that" (Respondent N). The PFI had "undoubtedly" delivered "an absolutely spanking, purpose-built college" (Respondent G), the PFI had resulted in a "very, very successful new build" (Respondent D). From a college senior management perspective the "PFI was a good procurement route" (Respondent J). For the owner and operator of the new campus the "PFI has delivered everything it was intended to" (Respondent M).

Competitiveness & Growth Policy Goal Realised

The findings here suggest that the sated policy goal of Growth and Competitiveness was realised. This is indicated by the quantitative data in table 7. It confirms growth in the volume of student activity across the sector of 316,000 WSUMs in the period from 1996 to 1999 (Scottish Parliament 1999, p. 5).

Grant Formula (WSUM)	**Volume of activity**
1996-97	1,528,000
1997-98	1,667,000
1998-99	1,844,000

Table 7 Growth in Volume of FE Activity
(Adapted from Further Education Funding In Scotland, Scottish Parliament 1999)

Qualitative data from Audit Committee witnesses and interview respondents reinforced the quantitative data. This painted a picture of a sector that was characterised by a rapidly growing, competitive environment in which growth was unrestrained. One respondent recalled that "the system was expanding so rapidly and people were competing so fiercely to expand" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1236-1237). For another "After incorporation, we had a huge competition among colleges to get extra numbers in" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231) and that this "competitive growth" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231) had been "unfettered" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230-1231). Related quantitative data regarding this policy goal shows the realisation of sector level efficiency gains through a reduction in unit costs of 23% in the five years between 1993/94 and 1998/99 (National Audit Office 1999).

Collaboration & Consolidation Policy Goal: Cautious Optimism

The findings here show that the funding council was "cautiously optimistic" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Annex B, col. 1228) about the consolidation strand of the

Collaboration and Consolidation policy goal being realised. They show that by 2005 the policy instrument of "sector-level financial security for all colleges" (Scottish Executive 2003; Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence) had reduced the number of colleges reporting deficits and that this had "been quite dramatic" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Annex B, col. 1228; Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). In giving oral evidence to the Audit Committee, the Head of the Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department stated that the "financial situation [in the sector] is more benign than the situation that was inherited, which undoubtedly helps the sector's financial condition" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1230). In further oral evidence, the Chief Executive of the Funding Council stated: "I am cautiously optimistic that when we get to our target date at the end of next year [2006], all colleges will be financially secure or very nearly so." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Annex B, col. 1228). This was underscored by further data in a written evidence submission from the funding council to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee in June 2005, which states that the financial health of colleges had "shown significant improvement" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 2.
HOW AND WHY DID THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE POLICY IMPACT UPON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANOTHER?

- Two funding policies impacted on the PFI policy.
- The Competitiveness and Growth policy provided the means to fund payments for the PFI campus.
- There was no other funding available to pay for the PFI.
- The Consolidation and Collaboration policy ended the means to fund the PFI payments.
- The college was unable to fund the PFI.
- An £11 million funding gap was created.
- The reason was change in sector-level funding policy.
- Implementation resulted in a unique estate situation for the West Lothian College.
- Funding the PFI through the policy and mechanism of funded student growth was questioned by some.

Box 3. Key Findings Sub-research Question 2

FINDINGS

Competitiveness & Growth: College Ability to Pay

The findings here reveal that how the Competitiveness and Growth policy impacted on the PFI policy was through the forming of a causal relationship (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, cited in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184) between them during their implementation. They show that this was intentional as government had decided that the Competitiveness and Growth policy would be the means by which the college would generate the income to pay for using the PFI-procured campus (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The government approved college PFI business case was based on assumptions agreed with the Scottish Office that funded growth would generate the income stream needed to pay for the use of the campus (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). That points to the impact of the Competitiveness and Growth policy on the PFI policy being positive and synergetic in that it supported the college's ability to pay for the PFI. Why the

Competitiveness and Growth policy impacted on the PFI policy was because there was no other income stream available to the college from any other source to pay for the West Lothian College PFI (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1202 - col. 1205, col. 1230-1231; Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Consolidation & Collaboration: College Unable to Fund PFI

These findings reveal that how the policy of Consolidation and Collaboration impacted on the policy of the PFI was also through the forming of a causal relationship (Oberthür & Gehring 2006, cited in Kalaba *et al* 2013, p. 184) between them during their implementation. The findings revealed that this particular interplay had not been thought about by government when it had decided to consolidate student activity levels (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1235-1237). The findings show the impact of this interaction was negative and in conflict with the PFI. As the Section 22 Report noted "This policy change has meant that the college is not funded to support the increased number of students assumed as part of the PFI contract." (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 7). As there was "no prospect of obtaining the funded growth originally envisaged at the time of the signing of the contract." the college would be unable to "fund the PFI based on current activity" creating "an £11 million funding gap over the next 20 years." (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 7). The findings also show that the reason why the Consolidation and Collaboration policy impacted on the PFI policy was a change in sector funding policy (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Unique Situation

The findings here show that the implementation of policies resulted in a unique estate situation for the West Lothian College. The findings here reveal that implementation resulted in the college's estate situation being unique relative to the norm of college

estates in Scotland. It was unique in being the only wholly-replacement further education college campus in Scotland procured through the PFI (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1199, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college estate was unique in being in private not public ownership (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college was unique in paying £97 million over 25-years to use the estate (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The college was also unique in getting a £43 million commitment from the Funding Council to support the PFI contract payments (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1199; Annexe B, Written Evidence). For a senior Funding Council executive, this was "quite different from the situation the other colleges in the sector found themselves in" (Respondent L). For a board member respondent, the college's estates costs were different to other colleges because "so much of our income needs to go against charges that are disproportionate to other colleges" (Respondent A). For a college senior management respondent the "funding streams from the funding council that support the PFI are different to other colleges" (Respondent J).

Naïve, Ludicrous & Prisoners of Context

The finding here shows that some respondents questioned the funding of the college's PFI payment streams through the policy of funded student growth. As other findings have shown the college's PFI business case was approved by government on the basis of agreed assumptions about growth in the college's centrally funded student activity levels (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Annexe B, Written Evidence). For one of the college senior management respondents, funding the PFI through the policy and mechanism of funded student growth was "a very naive way of funding such a significant investment, perhaps understandably a naive way" (Respondent J). Similar observations were offered by a senior funding council executive. This respondent

considered that the notion of a policy, such as funded growth, would "not change over 25 years" would now be seen as "ludicrous" (Respondent K). However, the same respondent "had no doubt" that "when the model was drawn up, people thought it was a sensible model". Having made that observation, the same respondent went on to state that, "I guess we are prisoners of our context" (Respondent K).

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 3:
WHAT WAS THE PROCESS BY WHICH THIS CAME ABOUT?

- There was a dependence on governance and multi-level governance to effect policy implementation.
- Policy-community type networks were used as a mode of governance.
- Government used the networks to steer others in the networks.
- Government relied upon a wide range and different combinations of policy actors and clusters of public and private organisations to implement and achieve its policy goals.
- Power-dependence was present throughout the process.
- Preference-shaping resulted in the PFI being the only procurement vehicle.
- The new campus was the result of a political decision by ministers.
- A powerful political influencer was involved in the process.
- The college was used to test the untried and untested policy of PFI in a sector with declining estates.
- Resource dependence was managed within rules of the game that regulated the process of exchange between policy actors.
- The college's PFI resource dependency was unique relative to the norm of college estates in Scotland.
- System feedback led to a change in policy.
- The techniques and practices of the NPM were involved in the process.
- Government undertook the role of network manager.
- The policy communities were viewed and understood as institutions.
- Path dependency played a part in the process.
- Network structure and social capital provided groups of actors with opportunities to act collectively.
- The college exercised individual agency by deciding the way in which it would put its case about what had caused the financial difficulties.
- A self-organising, interest intermediation network fought the college's case.

Box 4: Key Findings Sub-Research Question 3

FINDINGS

Governance Organising Perspective & Multi-level Governance

The findings here show that there was a dependence on governance to effect policy implementation (Rhodes 1997a). As a range of evidence submitted to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee shows, characteristics of governance, such as policy community networks, complexes of organisations and their clustering were found (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). This evidence also

showed the state devolving roles, power and responsibility for the statutory duty for further education to the quango of the funding council and the techniques and practices of the NPM (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Vertical multi-level governance (Marks 1992; Hooghe & Marks 2003) was evident through extensive cooperation and bargaining over resources taking place directly between national and sub-national organisations and actors at the highest and lowest levels (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Examples are HM Treasury, the Scottish Office and West Lothian College. The evidence also showed horizontal multi-level governance through extensive cooperation and bargaining over resources taking place directly between colleges, the quango of the funding council and non-governmental actors, such as the private sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The findings show that the NPM was also present in this horizontal multi-level governance through marketization, privatisation and contracting-out and resource allocation (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Policy Networks as Mode of Governance

The findings here show that policy networks were used as a mode of governance in the policy process (Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Rhodes 1997a). They show that four different resource dependent policy-community type networks were employed as policy instruments by government to steer actors toward its policy goals (Rhodes 1997a). These played a part in the process and operated over different time periods, involved different interdependent actors and clusters of organisations. Evidence from a range of official documents identified the following networks:

- Pre-1993 and pre-incorporation. Scotland's further education colleges were under local authority control and policy direction through twelve regional and island local authorities (Scottish Parliament 1999).
- 1993-1999, post-incorporation. 42 of the colleges were removed from local authority control (Audit Scotland 2003), given autonomy and made accountable, as incorporated bodies, to the Secretary of State for Scotland who set policy (Scottish Parliament 1999).
- 1997-2007. A PFI network that included the West Lothian College, HM Treasury, the Scottish Office, Scottish Executive, Private Finance Unit, Partnerships UK and private sector actors (PFI Scotland 2000, p. 1; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).
- 1999-2007. Post-devolution. The 42 colleges came under Scottish Executive control, which determined policy, with the sector administered by the Scottish Funding Council (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Steering by Government

The findings here show that government utilised these policy networks as an instrument to horizontally steer others in the networks, shape expectations, generate collective action and adopt its preferred policy positions over time (Rhodes 1997). As written evidence (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence) submitted to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee shows, such steering was applied to both public and private actors. The first finding shows that government steered the post-incorporation network of colleges, principals and college boards in government's intended policy direction of Competitiveness and Growth. It got them to implement that preferred policy position, which resulted in a competitive environment in which growth was unrestrained (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1236-1237). The second

finding shows that government steered the network that included the West Lothian College and private sector actors, in government's intended policy direction of the PFI and got them to implement that preferred policy position. The final finding here shows that government steered the post-devolution network of colleges, principals and college boards in government's intended policy direction of Consolidation and Collaboration. Government got them to accept the government and funding council view that financial security of the sector was a "high priority" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228).

Policy Actors & Multi-actor Process

These findings show that for government to implement and achieve its policy goals, it was reliant upon a wide range and different combinations of policy actors that interacted in different phases of a multi-actor process (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a). As evidence submitted to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee shows these policy actors included politicians, civil servants, college employer body executives, college senior managers, college governors, quango executives, private sector executives and consultants (Scottish Parliament, 2005b, col. 1198, col. 1223, col. 1224, col. 1228, 1230; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Multi-actors included a range of arm's length bodies and policy actors that were both elected and non-elected (Rhodes 1990). Examples from the data are the elected Scottish Office, Scottish Executive and unelected policy actors such as the quango of the funding council and the governing bodies of colleges, the private sector and Partnerships UK (Scottish Parliament, 2005b, col. 1198, col. 1223, col. 1224, col. 1228, 1230; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The reasons why these actors interacted were resource dependency, exchange and bargaining. The findings relating to these aspects follow.

Clusters of Organisations

The findings here point to clusters of organisations (Rhodes & Marsh 1992a; Rhodes 1997a) having been involved in the West Lothian College case. As written evidence (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1198, Annexe B, Written Evidence) submitted to the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee shows, these clusters comprised a significant number, variety and mix of organisations that included the public and private sector, government departments, a quango and a committee of the Scottish Parliament. In themselves, this variety and mix pointed to the presence of governance. These clusters included the Association of Scotland's Colleges, the Auditor General for Scotland, Audit Scotland, HM Treasury, HBG PFI Projects Ltd, other colleges, Partnerships UK, the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Funding Council, the Scottish Office and its Private Finance Unit, the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee, the West Lothian College, the West Lothian SPV Ltd (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1198, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The reasons why this complex of organisations clustered together and interacted was resources.

Power-Dependence

The findings here point to power-dependence being present throughout the process (Rhodes 1997a). They show that the public and private actors identified in earlier findings were interdependent as each needed resources from the other that were bargained over and exchanged in order to achieve actors' goals (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). They show that resource dependency and exchange included money, knowledge, expertise, consultation and co-operation (Rhodes 1986). One instance is that for government to achieve its further education policy goals, it was dependent on the funding council and colleges to implement them (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The funding council and

colleges were dependent on public funding from government, which they received in return for implementation (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). Another was that for government to achieve its goal of renewing and replacing ageing public infrastructure, such as the West Lothian College campus, it was reliant upon private sector finance to do so (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). In return for the college's use of that infrastructure the private sector partner received public funding (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The findings also show that there was resource dependency and exchange in the form of consultation and co-operation between the funding council, and the principals' forum, "to get a collective commitment" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1228) to "sorting out the basic financial management problems" of the sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1229).

Rules of the Game

The findings here show that resource dependence was managed within rules of the game that regulated the process of exchange between policy actors (Rhodes 2008). One specific example of these rules or norms of behaviour was illustrated by the "bigger picture" of the sector's finances (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228). They show that as part of this bigger picture, the principals of colleges had accepted the government and funding council view that financial security of the sector was a "high priority" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228). For the Chief Executive of the funding council the "management" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228) of colleges and in particular the "management board" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228) had an "important role to play" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1228) in achieving that financial security. At the same time, and in the context of these sector-wide decisions and sector level rules of the game, the Chief Executive also regarded institutions as

being “autonomous” (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1229) and that the boards of management were “responsible for their solvency” (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1229). The senior civil servant witness reinforced that point by stating that “at the end of the day” (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1230) financial responsibility “lies with individual colleges” (Scottish Parliament 2005b, Col 1230).

Power: Preference-Shaping - PFI or Nothing

The findings here reveal that power’s third dimension of preference-shaping (Lukes 2005, pp. 69-73) was exercised in the process. Evidence of this is the PFI becoming the procurement vehicle for the Livingston campus. They show that in adopting the previous government’s spending plans for 1997 to 1999, the newly elected government used that situation to shape the preferences of the less powerful West Lothian College and get what it wanted. For the former Scottish Executive minister these had been “tough decisions” (Respondent E), but were necessary for a post-1999 “purple patch in public expenditure” (Respondent E). The key issue “was to change the balance sheet of government at macro-economic level” (Respondent E). As the former Scottish Office Minister respondent observed, the college’s estates proposals “got caught-up” (Respondent G) in these spending plan decisions, as the “£20m” (Respondent G) for a new campus was “not in the Block grant” (Respondent G) of the Scottish Office. New ministers “had the same spending constraints as the [previous] Tory ministers” (Respondent G). It was in that context that the “PFI became the only game in town” (Respondent G). For one board member the reality was that there was no alternative for the college and “that it [the PFI] was the only mechanism available to us” (Respondent C) and “the only option was to push the PFI thing”. This parliamentarian respondent was quite clear that “had we not had PFI it is possible we wouldn’t have anything” (Respondent O).

Political Decision & Powerful Political Influence

The findings here suggest that a political decision ultimately determined that the new campus should be built. They also suggest that political actors made the decision. The former Scottish Office Minister respondent was in no doubt that "a political decision had been made to get it [the new campus] done" (Respondent G). For this same respondent, that belief was underscored by the speed with which it had been made. The new government was elected in May 1997 and by September 1997 the decision had been made. For the same respondent "the timescale [of that decision] tells you everything" (Respondent G). "Officials were told [by ministers] to get on with this" and to get the West Lothian College PFI "up and running and we'll worry about it later" (Respondent G). The result was that "within months you had the first PFI college in Scotland" (Respondent G). For this same respondent "these plans weren't there on 1 May 1997" (Respondent G). Another reason given for the decision being a political one, was that by that time the Westminster MP for Livingston, the late Robin Cook, was the newly appointed Foreign Secretary, who "was a powerful influence" and "had pressed for the new campus to go ahead" in his constituency (Respondent G). For a board respondent "the fact that there was a policy to have PFI and for this college to be the first to go down that route" had seen "real pressure to get a PFI agreement and, in a sense, I suspect worry about the detail later" (Respondent A).

Test Out PFI

The findings here reveal first of all that questions had been raised during the process about whether PFI could be applied in education. They go on to show that the college had been used to test that. For the former government minister respondents "the PFI was never designed for educational institutions" (Respondent E), PFI "had never been

thought of for education" (Respondent G) and that "we couldn't see how it could be applied effectively to an education establishment" (Respondent G). That had been about "how the private partner would get money" (Respondent G) from an education PFI. This was echoed by the private sector respondent who considered a college's funding stream to be "less secure" (Respondent M) than "primary or secondary education" (Respondent M). A senior college manager's view of PFI being the procurement route was that "they [government] needed someone to try it [the PFI] out" (Respondent J). Government needed to know "Will this work in the sector?" (Respondent J) as government "had got enough foresight to work out they had a sector with declining estates, that something mega was going to have to be done about it" (Respondent J) and they wanted to "test out PFI as an option" (Respondent J). That process resulted in the college's estate situation being a unique relative to the norm of college estates in Scotland.

System Feedback: Financial Instability

The findings here point to system feedback (Barrett & Fudge 1981; Mazmanian & Sabatier 1983; Birkland 2005) having played a part in the process. The first example of feedback showed that "the rapid period of expansion had put a strain on colleges that was plain for all to see." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1235) and "only one college in 46 was in good financial health." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1235). For another respondent "financial instability was the result of growth" (Respondent D) and that, "it [instability] had not been seen by the department" (Respondent D). This was attributed to "a lack of understanding [of the sector's funding]" on the part of officials at the quango of the SFEC. The same respondent considered that there had been "no zeal at Donaldson House [the funding council's offices] to get it right". The former senior civil servant respondent in the government department with

responsibility for that policy expressed the view that "there was disarray in that policy [of funded growth]" (Respondent F). This was put down to "a whole mix of things" (Respondent F) including "the underfunding of colleges" (Respondent F), "competition" (Respondent F) and taking in "as many students as possible" (Respondent F). The respondent felt that these had "sowed the seeds for the [financial] problems that are now encountered in the sector" (Respondent F).

System Feedback: On-going Affordability of Growth

The findings here show that a second issue identified by system feedback played a part in the process. This concerned the on-going affordability of the competitiveness and growth policy. The findings show that the Scottish Executive had decided it could no longer afford to fund a policy of growth in student numbers (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). This resulted in an immediate sector-wide cap on the level of WSUMs that each college was funded for (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The former senior civil servant respondent shared that there had been discussion with Scottish Executive Ministers about on-going affordability. The outcome was that "the fairest thing to do was to put a cap on [the funding]" (Respondent F). The "bigger picture" of the sector's financial security (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228) also featured. As the same respondent observed, "the general feeling was the cap would create stability in the system and create the conditions in which financial recovery would be more likely" (Respondent F). For a different respondent the purpose behind the cap "simply was to control the expansion of Further Education" [sic] (Respondent G), "expansion had worked" and the purpose of the cap was to "bed that expansion in" (Respondent G). For another respondent, the cap had been applied as "spending levels and strategic policy weren't well hooked up" (Respondent D).

New Public Management

The findings here show that the techniques and practices of the NPM (Hood 1996) were involved in the process through the delivery of public policy and public services. The NPM was applied in the college sector through government's funding policies for the sector. The evidence submitted to the Audit Committee (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence) reveals NPM techniques and practices in the form of quasi-markets, formula funding, target setting, measuring outputs and outcomes, securing value-for-money, performance indicators and efficiency gains (McTavish 2003; Nilsen *et al* 2013). For the college sector body respondent what was happening in the college sector as a result of these policy goals was how ministers "wanted to see public services run" (Respondent D) and that competition, market forces and efficiency gains were "spot on" (Respondent D). There was privatisation (Stoker 1998, Aucoin 1990) as the PFI brought in private sector finance to renew public infrastructure (Broadbent 2003), with the West Lothian College Livingston Campus being one specific example (PFI Scotland 2000, p. 1; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). There was also contracting-out to the private sector of the previously college operated facilities management service as part of the PFI contract (PFI Scotland 2000, p. 1; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Government as Network Manager

The findings here show that government acted as network manager by arranging and facilitating interaction processes to reach solutions and ensure that they were reached (van den Brink & Meijerink 2006, p. 10). The first example of this concerns the sector's parlous financial health and the bigger picture of its financial security. The Chief Executive of the Funding Council advised the Audit Committee that the

solution to overcoming that poor health had been the "so-called financial security campaign in 2002." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228). In reaching that solution, the Chief Executive advised that by working with the principals' forum, "it was possible to meet principals and to get a collective commitment [to the campaign]" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228). For the Chief Executive that had come down to principals' acceptance that financial security for the sector was "a high priority" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228). The Chief Executive went on to state that "the campaign's impact has been quite dramatic." (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228). The second example concerns the negotiated settlement of the West Lothian College PFI project. This involved the establishment of a project board comprising Partnerships UK, members from the Scottish Executive, the Scottish funding council, West Lothian College and the PFI provider HBG PFI Projects Ltd (Scottish Parliament 2005, par. 16). In this instance the solution needed was a mutually acceptable settlement that met the requirements of all parties (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). That was achieved (Scott-Moncrieff 2008).

Policy Communities as Institutions

The findings here suggest that the four policy communities identified in the case study can be viewed and understood as institutions due to the collection of informal rules that applied to and structured interactions between network actors (Blom-Hansen 1997; Scharpf 1997). The examples that follow show the operation of such rules offered the opportunity for actors in networks to realise their preferences (Rhodes 2008). The first concerns interactions between the Scottish Office, its Private Finance Unit, HM Treasury, HBG PFI Projects Ltd and the West Lothian College about satisfying the college's estate needs. That saw the preference of this network for a new campus in Livingston being realised (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1198,

Annexe B, Written Evidence). Another example concerns the interactions between the Scottish Executive, Scottish Funding Council and the Principals' Forum about colleges' financial deficits. That saw the preference of this network for a financial security campaign realised as it had been possible "to get a collective commitment" to it (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1228). A final example concerns the interactions between the network of Partnerships UK, the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Funding Council, West Lothian College and HBG PFI Projects Ltd about the college's PFI difficulties and "a resolution that meets everybody's needs" (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1198). That saw the preference of this network for a negotiated settlement realised (Scott-Moncrieff 2008).

Path Dependency

The findings here point to path dependency (Berman 1998) by the Funding Council playing a part when the financial difficulties of the West Lothian College had been raised with it. The findings point to the initial reaction of Funding Council officials being shaped by the history of events at several other colleges (Audit Scotland 2001; Scottish Executive 2003; Scottish Parliament 2005b, Annexe B, Written Evidence) that had "experienced severe financial difficulties" (Scottish Executive 2003) involving "financial mismanagement and other irregularities" (Audit Scotland 2001; Scottish Executive 2003). Evidence of such path dependency was revealed when the college had shown officials that the placing of the cap on student activity levels "had a negative effect on the college" (Respondent D). Officials had seen these financial difficulties "from their perspective and not the college's" (Respondent J). From the Funding Council perspective, the "West Lothian College was seen as a problem college" (Respondent G) and for the council officials these financial difficulties had been caused through "mismanagement of the college" (Respondent I). The findings

show that it had taken the arrival of a new Chief Executive at the Funding Council to "bring focus or the beginnings of it" (Respondent C) to an understanding by the Funding Council (Scottish Parliament 2005b, col. 1235) of what had actually caused these financial difficulties.

Network Structure, Social Capital & Agency

The findings here point to the part played in the process by policy network structure, social capital (Milward & Provan 1998) and agency (Coleman 1990). These first findings show that the socially cohesive structures of policy community networks provided actors with opportunities to act collectively. The consultation and co-operation between the Funding Council and the Principals' Forum about college financial deficits (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1228) showed it was possible "to get a collective commitment" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1228) to "sorting out the basic financial management problems" of the sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1229). That had come down to "the principals' acceptance that financial security is a high priority and that they must ensure that they get a grip on their finances." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, col. 1228). The next finding suggests that the college exercised individual agency by deciding the way in which it would put its case about what had caused the financial difficulties. It is claimed that by acting independently but within the network structure, the college realised its intentions and preferences. These were that the issues involved in the college's financial difficulties be presented "more widely and visibly" (Respondent G) through the public scrutiny and accountability process of the Section 22 Reports. For a senior management respondent had the college gone about putting its case differently, it "would have jumped the gun and lost support" (Respondent J).

One Interest Intermediation Network

The findings here point to a self-organising, interest intermediation network (Jordan, Halpin & Maloney 2004; Rhodes 2006), which operated from 2002-2007 to fight the college's case. Network actors included paid professional private sector lobbyists, the communities of West Lothian, local politicians (councillors, MPs and MSPs), West Lothian Council, local companies, college staff and students, the college's senior management team, public sector unions and the College Board. Its value and importance was underscored by a variety of respondents. For a board respondent it was about "trying to get people's attention" (Respondent B). For one parliamentarian respondent, given the "difficult circumstances" (Respondent O), the college had done well to "get the issue on the agenda". Another parliamentarian respondent considered that the lobbyists had given "good, professional advice to managers", as they had an "understanding of the process of politics" and "it had been worth taking their advice and getting an outside view". The former senior civil servant respondent felt that "MSPs were closer" and "in touch" with the college (Respondent F). This resonated with the comments of another board respondent, who felt that the "support and advice" (Respondent B) of local MSPs had been "useful".

SUB-QUESTION 4.
WHAT PART DID CHANGES IN ORGANISING PERSPECTIVE, POLICY NETWORKS AND ACTORS PLAY IN THE PROCESS?

- The change in organising perspective provided a more proximate and devolved setting for scrutiny and accountability.
- The Auditor General for Scotland, Section 22 Reports and the Scottish Parliament's Audit Committee had been nothing but helpful.
- Audit Committee scrutiny was about the PFI model; not college mismanagement.
- The college emerged from scrutiny with credibility.
- Changes in policy networks brought new networks into the process and interdependence between networks which influenced policy, resource dependencies, scrutiny and accountability.
- Change in policy actors brought more, different and some new actors into the process.
- These actors effected policy change, change in resource dependencies, change in scrutiny and accountability.
- The process was handled by different actors.
- There was no continuity in actors, some showed little interest, others served vested self-interests and some seemed not to care.

Box 5: Key Findings Sub-Research Question 4

FINDINGS

Change in Organising Perspective

The findings here show that the part played by the change in organising perspective (Judge 1993; Burch & Holliday 1996; Rhodes 1997a, 2000) provided the context in which scrutiny of the college's financial difficulties took place in the more proximate and devolved settings (Jeffery 2009, in Haydecker 2010, p. 3) of the Scottish Parliament and its Audit Committee. For one MSP respondent, had they been taken up through the National Audit Office, they would have been "small beer" (Respondent O) in relative terms. The Scottish Parliament, the office of the Auditor General for Scotland and the Scottish Parliament's Audit Committee were viewed by respondents as having impacted "very directly" (Respondent B) on the matter of the financial difficulties and that "MSPs were more interested than ministers" (Respondent K). For one senior management respondent, "the Auditor General for

Scotland, as an independent body, had been crucial to the whole process" (Respondent J). The findings show that the *Section 22 Reports* allowed the committee to formally take-up the issue of the college's financial difficulties (Scottish Parliament 2005c). The Auditor General and the *Section 22 Reports* were "the catalyst" (Respondent J), they had "got the problem into the open" (Respondent J) and had been "nothing but helpful" (Respondent J). For the same respondent, without the *Section 22 Reports* the college "would have jumped the gun and lost support" (Respondent J). For another respondent the reports had allowed the college's case to be presented "more widely and visibly" (Respondent G) and The process was also seen by respondents as having called the Chief Executive of the Funding Council "to account" (Respondent B), resulting in funding council "concessions" and "special funding arrangements" (Respondent B) for the college until its financial difficulties were resolved. This respondent was "confident" that the college "would not have got that commitment" (Respondent B) otherwise.

Changes in Policy Networks

The findings here show that changes in policy networks (Rhodes 1997a) brought new networks into the process as well as interdependence between networks which influenced policy, resource dependencies, scrutiny and accountability. The new post-incorporation network brought central government directly into the process through assuming the statutory duty for further education. That created a direct relationship between central government and colleges, while new policy resulted in marketisation, funding methodologies, a drive for efficiency and cost reductions (Scottish Parliament 1999). The West Lothian College's estate needs also became part of that direct relationship. PFI procurement of the Livingston campus created a new network and interdependence with private sector networks. That changed the college's resource

dependencies through private finance, privatisation and contracting out and brought the private sector fully into the public services delivered by the college (PFI Scotland 2000, p. 1; Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The change to a devolved organising perspective brought a new network where responsibility for the statutory duty shifted from government to the funding council quango that operated at 'arm's length' from elected policymakers and was administratively separate from government. As earlier findings showed, the same change saw scrutiny and accountability of the sector and its funding take place in the more proximate and devolved settings of the Scottish Parliament and its Audit Committee (Scottish Parliament, 2005, a, b, c,).

Changes in Policy Actors

The findings here show that change in policy actors (Hall 1993; Arregui, Stokman & Thomson 2004) brought more, different and some new actors into the process. They also show that these actors effected policy change, change in resource dependencies, change in scrutiny and accountability, and that different actors handled these over time. The Secretary of State for Scotland, the Scottish Office and the SOEID were brought directly into the process by incorporation and these actors then determined sector policy and exerted control over resource dependencies (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). HM Treasury, the Private Finance Unit, Partnerships UK and private sector actors were brought into the process through PFI procurement resource dependencies (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The new actor of the Scottish Executive was brought into the process as a result of devolution. The Executive determined sector policy, priorities and financial resources, while the new quango of the funding council implemented sector policy and distributed sector financial resources (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B,

Written Evidence). The new actors of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Parliament Audit Committee and the Auditor General for Scotland were also brought into the process as a result of devolution, taking on the scrutiny and accountability of the college sector (Scottish Parliament, 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

SUB-QUESTION 5.
WHAT WAS THE EFFECT OF THIS POLICY MESS AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE FOR THE DIFFERENT ACTORS?

- The payment terms of the PFI contract could not be met by the college.
- The accountability and scrutiny process removed any notion of mismanagement by the college.
- The college's organisational response was a positive unintended consequence.
- The financial difficulties became a common adversary that united college staff, management and the board.
- Public relations were a double-edged sword for the college.
- The model of facilities management provided through the PFI was valued.
- For the private sector owner the college PFI was the first concession they had that was experiencing funding difficulties.
- The funding council committed to not reducing financial support to the college until a resolution of the financial difficulties was reached.
- The part played by government and the funding council in the college's financial difficulties were aired in public.
- The public airings resulted in unhelpful press coverage about government's 'flagship' PFI policy.

Box 6: Key Findings Sub-Research Question 5

FINDINGS

West Lothian College: Financial Difficulties

The findings here show that for the West Lothian College the effect of this policy mess and unintended consequence (Hennessy 1992, p.453; Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a, p. 13; Grantham 2001; Norton 2002) created what the Auditor General called "difficulties" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence) in relation to the PFI contract. They had undermined the college's business model and the college's ability to pay the private sector owner for the use of the new campus. The Section 22 Report highlighted that "As a result of the policy changes, the level of activity related grant funding available to the college is lower than that assumed in the model underpinning the PFI contract." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The report went on to state that "the college will be unable to meet its [PFI] contractual commitments" (Scottish Parliament 2005c,

Annexe B, Written Evidence). For a college senior manager, the effect on the college was an "edge of the cliff job" (Respondent J). For another respondent "had [activity] funding matched growth in students, the [PFI payment] figures would have stacked up." (Respondent N).

Stripped Out Notion of College Mismanagement

The findings here show that another effect for the college was to remove any notion of mismanagement by it. The findings show that through the accountability process, scrutiny had also fallen on the college and that it emerged from that scrutiny with credibility. West Lothian was one of three colleges called before the Audit Committee (Scottish Parliament, 2005c). For one board respondent, while "it was not pleasant to be called in the company of other colleges" (Respondent B), West Lothian, unlike the others, was not there because of "budgets being mismanaged" (Respondent B). West Lothian's appearance was about the "PFI model" (Respondent B). This was commented on by the two college senior management respondents. The Audit Committee had been "hugely helpful" and had put the issue of the college's financial difficulties "centre stage" (Respondent J). Appearing before the committee had "given the college credibility, standing and gravitas" (Respondent J). For the other college senior management respondent, the committee's scrutiny was seen as "stripping out" (Respondent I) any notion that the college's funding difficulties had been due to "mismanagement of the college" (Respondent I). Another board respondent felt the process had shown the "evidence was not there" (Respondent A) to support claims made by officials of "mismanagement" by the college (Respondent A).

College Organisational Response: A Real Plus

The following finding shows that policy mess produced a positive unintended consequence in the shape of the college's organisational response. For one college senior manager, the organisational response was a "real plus" (Respondent I). It had been a "great learning curve for individuals and the institution", "even down to the way the college operated" and "hugely beneficial" (Respondent I). It was "business like", "very focussed", had "sharpened decision-making", "identified priorities", "made the business more efficient and effective" and had led to a "huge understanding of sequential policy making" (Respondent I). For another senior college manager, dealing with these financial difficulties had demanded "tremendous mental agility" on the part of the college's senior management team (Respondent J). As evidence of this, a board respondent felt the difficulties had transformed "the management approach to other income" (Respondent A), "bringing about some of the [organisational] changes that would have been needed in any case" (Respondent A). Income generation lessons were "learned quicker and better than might have been the case" by senior management (Respondent A). Even then as this college senior manager observed, "It's probably taken us three years to build up an income stream of £2.5m" (Respondent I). "We can never make up the long-term gap-funding of £11m caused by the PFI" (Respondent I).

College: Other Effects

Three other effects in respect of the college were found. For one senior college manager, the difficulties had the "unintended consequence" (Respondent J) of becoming a "common adversary" (Respondent J) for staff, management and the board (Respondent J). The difficulties had "united college staff", who had "got behind the issue". The next finding shows that another effect for the college was negative

perceptions and reputational damage caused by the financial difficulties (Edinburgh Evening News 2006; The Scotsman 2007). Public relations had to be used by the college to manage this. For this senior management respondent a "double-edged sword" of negative and positive news had the "unintended consequence" (Respondent I) of increasing the public relations profile of the college in its local communities through a steady stream of good news stories. The final effect concerned the facilities management service provided through the PFI. For this college senior manager respondent "the model of the PFI had been invaluable" (Respondent I) and the respondent "did not want to lose that" (Respondent I). This same senior manager did not "want to return to the grace and favour model" (Respondent I) of the previous in-house estates management.

Effects: Private Sector Partner

The findings here show the effect of policy mess and unintended consequence (Hennessy 1992, p.453; Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a, p. 13; Grantham 2001; Norton 2002) for the private sector partner/actor. This was that the payment terms of the PFI contract could not be met by the college as intended (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). For the private sector respondent, whose company also owned PFI schools, the college was "the first concession we have had that is experiencing funding difficulties" (Respondent M), as "the expectation of income to the college had not matched the business case that supported the PFI structure" (Respondent M). In this respondent's view the college's funding stream "was less secure than secondary or primary education" (Respondent M) while the funding stream from a local authority was "more secure" (Respondent M). This was "not the case in further education" (Respondent M). For the private sector respondent, the "West Lothian College was a perfect example of it [being less

secure].” (Respondent M). The respondent disclosed that the funding stream had been an early concern for this actor going “all the way back to when the contract was being negotiated” (Respondent M) and “to letters of comfort” (Respondent M) discussions with government about the West Lothian College PFI deal.

Effects: Other Actors

The findings here reveal the effect of this policy mess and unintended consequence (Hennessy 1992, p.453; Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a, p. 13; Grantham 2001; Norton 2002) for other actors such as government and the Funding Council. For the Funding Council one effect was that it had undertaken not to “withdraw or in some way curtail the college's funding until the situation has been fully resolved” (Scottish Parliament, 2005b, col. 1225). Other findings show that the part played by government and the Funding Council in the circumstances that led to the college’s financial difficulties were aired through the public hearings conducted by the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee (Scottish Parliament 2005b) and published in its report (Scottish Parliament 2005, AU/S2/05/R7). The hearings also resulted in press coverage about the ‘flagship’ policy of the PFI. Examples are “PFI test on college growth faces axe.” (TES 2005). “GBP 25m bill to bail out PFI college. Taxpayer could foot cost of failed scheme [sic].” (The Herald 2006). “PFI buyout costs taxpayers £20m as Scots college cuts its losses [sic].” (The Scotsman 2007). As this respondent remarked “the Press see every step back from a PFI scheme as a kick in the face for the Government and the Executive.” (Respondent E). As the next set of findings show, other effects were policy learning and policy change.

SUB-QUESTION 6.
WHAT POLICY LEARNING AND CHANGE AROSE AS A RESULT?

- Policy failure led to policy learning and policy change.
- Financial resource distribution was the cause of policy failure.
- Policy learning showed the importance of fully assessing the financial impact of sector-level policy change particularly at college level**.**
- There was policy learning about PFI as a suitable procurement vehicle for infrastructure projects in the college-sector.
- There was policy learning about facilities management as an assumed benefit of the PFI.
- There was policy learning about the value of estates life-cycle budgets.
- A change in capital funding policy followed policy learning
- Policy change resulted in a wider range of options for capital funding.

Box 7: Key Findings Sub-Research Question 6

FINDINGS

Resource Distribution - Cause of Policy Failure

The findings here argue that policy learning was informed by and as a result of policy failure (Hall 1993; Sabatier 1993) and that the cause of failure in the West Lothian College case was financial resource distribution. That failure was caused by the impact of government combining two specific policy measures, the Consolidation and Collaboration policy and the PFI policy. The evidence shows that the necessary resource distribution in the form of the income stream necessary to pay for the Livingston Campus would now not match assumptions previously agreed with and by government. That claim is reinforced by evidence from the Auditor General for Scotland in the Section 22 Report on the West Lothian College. The report states that "The financial case made in favour of the PFI deal was based on agreed assumptions about funded growth in student activity in line with a prevailing policy for growth in further education numbers." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence). The Report goes on to say that "As a result of the policy changes, the level of activity related grant funding available to the college is lower than that

assumed in the model underpinning the PFI contract" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Annexe B, Written Evidence).

Policy Learning: Sector Level Policy Change

The findings here suggest policy learning (Hall 1993; Sabatier 1993) about sectoral level policy change. They show that policy makers needed to clearer about the potential impact of sector level policy change and how that might impact at the local level of colleges (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236). Earlier findings showed that the decision to end funded student growth was taken in the interests of the sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236). While the Audit Committee understood "the logic of that decision" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236) members questioned whether the impact of the change at a college level had been properly considered by those making the change (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236). The Chief Executive of the Funding Council confirmed that the decision had not been taken "on account of any one college" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236) and that where colleges had found that policy impact "difficult" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236), it then became an issue to be addressed and it was up to the council "to engage with individual institutions on any specific issues." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1235-1236). The need for learning from that approach was highlighted by a specific recommendation in the Audit Committee's Report (Scottish Parliament 2005c). It stated that "The Committee wished to stress the importance of fully assessing the financial impact of policy change, in particular at college level." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Appendix A, par. 35).

Policy Learning: Suitability of PFI

The findings here show there was learning about the suitability of PFI as a procurement vehicle in the college sector. Oral evidence of learning was given to the Audit Committee by the Head of the Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department. This witness advised "There has been quite a lot of learning about PFI during the past five to ten years" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1227). Policy learning showed that in all but certain types of very large capital project, PFI/PPP was not an appropriate procurement vehicle for the college sector (Scottish Funding Council 2005; Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226). The scale and nature of projects, difficulty in bundling projects in an autonomous sector and limited potential to generate efficiency savings were the reasons (Scottish Funding Council 2005; Scottish Parliament 2005c). Other learning concerned "relatively small" prospective capital values (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 12). In oral evidence to the committee, the Chief Executive of the Funding Council clarified "relatively small" as follows: "If the project costs in the region of £20m to £30m, PFI is not really worth considering, but there might be gains for projects of £30m to £50m and upwards." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 12). In further evidence, the same witness stated that while the "PFI for West Lothian was one of the first of its kind" (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 12), it was "unlikely that a similar project would be procured via a PFI route today." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 12).

Policy Learning: Assumed Benefit of PFI & Life-cycle Budget

The first finding here shows that there was learning by the Funding Council about an assumed key benefit of the PFI. In oral evidence to the committee, the Funding Council's Chief Executive explained, it had been assumed that a private sector contractor "would make efficiencies in the running costs" of facilities management

and that these would “offset the extra profit element and so on that is built into the contract” (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226). Policy learning had shown that whereas local authorities can bundle-up schools into one large PFI scheme and produce a big facilities management project, "That approach is not as easy in further education, particularly when each college is an independent autonomous institution." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226) and that “there is not much scope for that in FE colleges." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226). The second finding shows that there was also learning by Funding Council officials about maintaining a capital asset, such as a new estate, through its lifetime by means of “full life-cycle costs” (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226). For this senior funding council executive, the discipline of the PFI during the operational stage of the West Lothian College campus project had highlighted the need for and value of a “life-cycle budget” (Respondent K) throughout the operational phase of any capital estates project; however procured.

Change of Path Direction & Policy Change

The findings here show that there was a change in path direction (Berman 1998; Gains *et al* 2005) and change (Hall 1993) in the capital policy for the college sector in Scotland following learning about the PFI. The change removed the requirement for colleges to test their capital expenditure plans against the PFI route; the so-called ‘PFI test’ (Scottish Funding Council 2006). In oral evidence, the Funding Council’s Chief Executive advised the Audit Committee that this would “no longer be a requirement” (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226) and that the Private Finance Unit in the Scottish Executive “agrees with the decision.” (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1226). In other oral evidence, the Head of the Scottish Executive’s Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department confirmed that the PFI policy “has been modified.” (Scottish Parliament 2005c, par. 1227). The change was noted in the Audit

Committee's report, which stated that new guidance from the Funding Council would "recognise the range of options now available for capital funding." (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Appendix A) and that "This wider range of options should better meet the needs of individual colleges in improving their estate**."** (Scottish Parliament 2005c, Appendix A).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

Introduction

The conclusions and discussion that follow in this final chapter identify key points that can be drawn from this research. The chapter seeks to emphasise important aspects of my research as supported by the findings and to reflect the potential use, relevance, or implications of the reported findings. Generalisations have also been made to public policy implementation theory, policy network theory and other areas of public policy where there is interdependence. Before considering the above, the chapter begins with a reminder of the research theme.

Research Theme

The importance of my research lay in adding to the body of knowledge around public policy implementation theory, the unintended consequences (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Rhodes 1997a; Grantham 2001) of government action and policy mess. The particular example of the West Lothian College's PFI-procured Livingston campus was used as a case study. The literature review identified that public policy implementation was an area of concern and hence research and highlighted that much had been researched and written about organisation theory and public administration (Hargrove 1983). It also showed how the field of implementation research (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984) had developed and grown over recent decades (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). It remains highly relevant to this day, given the shift in emphasis from 'government' to 'governance' (Rhodes 1997a, 2000) and the increasing importance of the concept of governance (Hill & Hupe 2009). That shift has seen a move away from only vertical command and control means and ends of policy steering, towards governance settings that are more horizontal or differentiated (Hill & Hupe 2009). The literature identified the policy process as a cycle with up to eighteen-stages, of

which implementation is the sixteenth (Dror 1989, pp. 163-4) and of itself considered worthy of analysis (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 7). During implementation, policy may be substantially changed (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 7), with profound implications for the substance of a policy (Anderson 1975, pp. 78-9). System feedback (Birkland 2005, pp. 224-227) is also is an important part of the policy-making process. It is the information that re-enters the system, informs the next round of policy-making and closes the loop of the policy-making process (Birkland 2005, pp. 224-227). The literature review also identified that the application of policy network analysis was an appropriate tool to examine the cited case study and to address the main research question and sub-questions (Rhodes 1990; Marsh & Rhodes 1992). The review illustrated that contemporary policy issues are complex, with decentralisation and fragmentation of delivery, coupled with interdependence, sitting alongside the centralisation of political power (Peters & Pierre 1998; Stoker 1998; Rhodes 1999). It also identified that although the policy process may be driven by political and ideologically charged forces, networks are able to shape the policy process at the implementation level and coexistence may result in the policy intentions of government often having unintended consequences (Maloney & Richardson 1995; Grantham 2001). This should not be interpreted as implying that ideology and politics do not affect policy implementation, they do. In the West Lothian College case, respondents noted the zeal of HM Treasury for the PFI and how government had exercised and used considerable power and control over financial resources to shape the college's preferences and steer it down the route of the PFI, regardless of the fact that PFI had not been proven in education. The literature review suggested that using an appropriate theoretical framework, such as policy networks, could be useful in highlighting the complexity of policy decisions, while offering-up a good account of

policy change and policy impact (Smith 1993; Marsh 1998). The review also pointed to gaps in the literature. It was found that contemporary public policy implementation is not well researched in education and is even less well understood in the context of further education. A gap was also found when it came to the writing-up of my research and in particular the important topic of 'showing the workings' (Holliday 2001, p. 47) of my research.

Synthesis of Main Points

The West Lothian College case has shown that the process of policy implementation is an uncertain, complex, messy and multi-actor process, in which no single policy actor has the resource capability to address policy issues on its own (Hill & Hupe 2002, 2009). This has implications for government when policy implementation issues arise. While overall responsibility for the provision of further education lay with government, the West Lothian College case showed that government cannot do everything and simply did not have the capability on its own to resolve the policy implementation issues that had arisen. Whilst the Scottish Government was the most powerful actor in terms of authority and financial resources, it still had to rely on the cooperation and agreement of non-state actors, such as the governing bodies of colleges and the private sector, to address and resolve the financial difficulties of both the further education sector and the West Lothian College. The research also shows that the West Lothian College was a prisoner of both its own context and that of the policy context. The data clearly highlight that the intersection and interplay of an ensemble of sequentially implemented public policies became a significant issue when sectoral level priorities and decisions took precedence over those of a single college. The policy mess created by these sectoral level actions had immediate and mainly negative unintended consequences, principally for the West Lothian College,

which directly undermined its ability to fulfil contractual commitments regarding its privately owned campus. The fact that those policy actors, such as the funding council and government, who had determined and implemented these actions paid scant heed to the potential for negative consequences at the level of an individual college, is, at best, disconcerting, particularly given the clearly interdependent nature of policy in the West Lothian College case. They simply changed policy and moved on. Given that situation, the on-the-record assertion by certain organisational elites to a parliamentary committee that colleges are autonomous is simply untenable and highlights the centre's power and control over colleges. Comments by interview respondents that it was naïve to adopt a long-running policy of government as the basis of the college's business case assumptions and that it was ludicrous to think that such a policy would not change, underscore that the West Lothian College was a prisoner of its context and that the context was determined by public policy and its implementation. Notably, no evidence of mismanagement on the part of the West Lothian College regarding its financial difficulties was cited by the Auditor General for Scotland, the funding council, the Scottish Executive's Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department, the Scottish Parliament's Audit Committee or any of the elite respondents.

The West Lothian College case had no shortage of policy networks, with four discernible interest intermediation networks (Jordan, Halpin & Maloney 2004; Rhodes 2006) having been involved. Unsurprisingly, three of these were dominant, institutionalised, sectoral, policy-community networks (Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Rhodes 1997a) that operated as follows:

- Pre-1993. Scotland's further education colleges were under local authority control through 12 regional and island local authorities.

- 1993-1999. 42 (Audit Scotland 2003) of the colleges were removed from local authority control, given autonomy and made accountable, as incorporated bodies, to the Secretary of State for Scotland (Scottish Parliament 1999).
- 1999-2007. The 42 (Audit Scotland 2003) colleges were under funding council control.

These three were focused on the structural relationships between policy actors and clusters of organisations (Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Rhodes 1997a) involved in the development and implementation of further education policy in Scotland (Finlay 2007; Mackie & Williamson 2007). Changing over a long time span, their features were in keeping with the literature (Marsh & Rhodes 1992; Rhodes 1997a, 1997b; Butt 2000), while legislative, policy and organising perspective change (Finlay 2007; Mackie & Williamson 2007) were the principal reasons for changes to networks and their membership (Arregui, Stokman & Thomson 2004). A most interesting finding was the fourth self-organising interest intermediation network (Jordan, Halpin & Maloney 2004; Rhodes 2006) that had emerged from the West Lothian College itself. This served the valuable purpose of bringing together different interests in both formal and informal ways to fight the college's case and included gaining influential access, reconciling different interests, influencing government and funding council policy and decision-making, and lobbying key decision-makers. Latterly, this network was involved in the successful negotiation and implementation of a viable solution and negotiated settlement (Stokman & Van den Bos 1992) of the financial difficulties faced by the college.

It would be wrong to assume from this research that policy networks are a new feature of government in Britain. They are not and have been a long-standing feature of

government (Rhodes 2002). What the literature does show, and confirmed by this study, is that there has been a spread of networks in British government (Rhodes 2002), added to in Scotland by devolution (Pierre 2000; Finlay 2007). While the nation-state has retained a leading role in this vertical, multi-level governance environment and has continued to steer policy developments and implementation in the further education sector in Scotland, it is clear that through policy networks, bodies other than the state, such as the incorporated colleges, the college sector body and the private sector have been able to and did influence the policy process. There was also fragmentation of delivery through the policy of the PFI and the contracting out of facilities management services to the private sector as part of the West Lothian College PFI contract.

Any notion that the core executive of government has been squeezed out of the policy process by the presence of governance and networks has been shown by this study to be naive. There is no question that government was mutually dependent on and needed to co-operate and exchange resources with other policy actors (Rhodes 1990) to achieve its further education policy goals. Further, the study confirms that in this multi-actor process, implementation was reliant upon and undertaken by a range of arm's length bodies and policy actors (Rhodes 1990) such as the private sector, the quango of the funding council and the governing bodies of colleges**.** However, the West Lothian College case clearly shows that the core executive of the state still exerts considerable control over other policy actors. In terms of authority and financial resources, it remains the most powerful actor in the policy process, with the centralisation of political power sitting, however easily or uneasily, alongside decentralisation and fragmentation of delivery (Peters & Pierre 1998; Stoker 1998; Rhodes 1999).

The presence and use of power (Lukes 2005), particularly by powerful policy actors such as government and HM Treasury and power-dependence were highly visible in this case. The data show that the nation state, through its core executive of HM Treasury, ministers and parent departments, exercised considerable power and control over successive further education sector networks and essentially steered the networks in the core executive's desired direction of policy travel. Not only was power and interdependence over resources more than evident, it was also clear that power and interdependence were unequal in their distribution (Rhodes 1997a). The data show that while government held financial resources and authority, and determined policy, the sector body and colleges, such as West Lothian, were in a much weaker position to resist government policy, as they were reliant on central funding. It was through this power-dependence (Rhodes 1997a) that ministers, senior civil servants and quango executives, steered (Rhodes 1997a) colleges, principals and the private sector to accept policy decisions. It is also more than evident that political actors had made the decision that the new West Lothian College campus should be procured through the policy of the PFI. Ministers and civil servants used 'preference-shaping' power (Lukes 2005 p.29) to steer West Lothian College's estates interests down the procurement route of the PFI, with UK macro-economic policy and the spending plans of the UK government being the drivers. However, the parliamentarians closely scrutinised and questioned the power-dependence and steering that had led to sectoral level decisions and collective commitments (Scottish Parliament 2005c). This brought transparency to a process, which up to that point had not been open to the public gaze or detailed scrutiny. The case also showed that the parliamentarians found it necessary to stress to government and its agency the importance of fully

assessing the financial impact of policy change, particularly at college level (Scottish Parliament 2005c).

The study clearly shows that there were unintended consequences, both positive and negative, as a result of sectoral level policy changes. However, it is also worth re-stating that in respect of the negative consequences, there is no evidence to show that any individual or actor intended them. For the West Lothian College, the unintended consequence of a change in funding policy had serious consequences as it undermined the viability of the college's financial model. There were also positive unintended consequences for West Lothian College in the form of its organisational response, which was an important and positive dimension of the case. In order to do what it could to address the financial strain arising from the PFI funding gap, the college had initiated a bottom-up creative fourth policy, the aim of which was to increase income from sources other than that of core funding. While the policy of generating income had achieved some success, it was recognised that the college could not close an £11m funding gap on its own. Another unintended consequence was that the public relations profile of the college increased through a steady stream of good news stories, countering the negativity of the funding situation. The funding situation also had the unintended consequence of uniting the college staff. Sectoral level policy change also had negative outcomes for the private sector partner in that the payment terms of the PFI contract could not be met by the West Lothian College as intended. For other policy actors there was political damage, particularly for the Scottish Executive and the funding council, in that the circumstances leading to the college's financial difficulties were amplified through hearings conducted in public by the Scottish Parliament Audit Committee. For the UK government there was also negative press coverage (Edinburgh Evening News 2006; The Scotsman 2007) about PFI in the

context of a failing PFI project involving the only wholly-replacement college campus in Scotland that had been procured through the PFI.

A notable finding of the West Lothian College case is just how unique it was. First of all it was unique in that West Lothian College has, to date, been the only wholly-replacement further education college campus in Scotland procured through the route of the PFI. Secondly, it was unique in that it did not own its main campus. Instead it was owned by the private sector (Scottish Parliament 2005c). A third instance of uniqueness was that West Lothian College was the only PFI contract operated by the private sector partner that was experiencing funding difficulties. The college was also unique in a fourth respect when compared with other PFI contracts in the education sector, in that the income stream of funded student growth was less secure than secondary or primary education. Finally, the college was also unique as the funding of its estate was different when compared to every other college in Scotland.

There clearly was policy learning as a result of this case regarding sectoral level policy change and in particular the West Lothian College's experiences of procuring an estate through the PFI. The Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Report of 2005 (Scottish Parliament 2005c) emphasised the need for government and the funding council to be clear about the financial impact that sectoral level policy changes can have at the level of individual colleges (Scottish Parliament 2005c). Other learning concerned the type and size of project, which was considered suitable for PFI (Scottish Parliament 2005c) and the need for a life-cycle budget throughout the operational phase of any capital estates projects, however procured. The funding council also issued revised guidance regarding capital projects and the requirement for them to undergo a so-called 'PFI test'.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for practitioners in the field of public policy implementation:

1. There is a need to anticipate and avoid unintended consequences and to do so in a cost-effective way to reduce the likelihood of error and improve the quality and effectiveness of policymaking.
2. More thought needs to be given to the potential for impact at the policy design stage.
3. There is a need for a policy impact statement or assessment to identify possible implementation problems or barriers to success. Instead of these being identified after the event an attempt should be made to have some early warning and understanding of potential constraints so that policy could be modified or adapted in advance of its implementation.
4. Government needs to be more alert to considering the security or not of funding sources/streams to the Funding Council and colleges, so that these bodies can better inform their own strategic planning and implementation processes.

Future Directions

The gap in implementation studies identified in this thesis offers new possibilities and a locus for much fruitful policy network research concerning the strategic relationship between colleges, government and funding council (McTavish 1998, p. 126). I believe there is scope for this particularly concerning the recent reform agenda of the Scottish Government's regionalisation of Scotland's colleges and the shift to outcome agreements. The PNA approach adopted in this thesis would offer a way to examine that change in structure and examine its impact on the strategic relationship. It would also offer the opportunity to examine whether the goals of implementing

regionalisation, such as meeting regional needs might be fulfilled. Another fruitful area for further implementation research concerns the impact of the new outcome agreements between the funding council and colleges. This could compare the impact of agreements in the college sector with the university sector in Scotland, where such agreements have operated for some time.

Limitations

Whilst this research has resulted in what it is hoped are interesting findings, the work had its limitations and it is important that these are highlighted to the reader. The first limitation was that the interviews were restricted to a relatively small number of political and organisational elites. It could be reasonably argued that a larger, less tightly drawn grouping could have led to findings other than those presented here. However, the justification for such a small, tightly drawn grouping is that their intimacy with the case was a key part of the research design. The organisational and political elites targeted, had, as I did, intimate and privileged knowledge of and involvement in the West Lothian College case. For some, this had spanned many years and every network. Given the highly complex, political and dynamic nature of the case, their individual viewing points offered the opportunity for insights that might otherwise have remained out of public sight. The second limitation of the study was that it did not overtly involve students, the staff of the college, or the wider communities of West Lothian. At best, the research nodded at these actors in that their voices were channelled through the college's network and its subsequent response. Had these voices been given more prominence in the research, it may have been possible to explore the impact of the college's funding difficulties on the learner experience and how staff and communities perceived events. This could possibly have strengthened and broadened the research by offering street level insights in

contrast to those of organisational and political elites. Consequently, it is unknown if the findings would generalise to these wider communities. However, it should be noted that the people who were interviewed, such as former government ministers, MSPs, senior college managers, College Board members, funding council executives and senior civil servants, were interesting and what they said was important, regardless of what other views may have been gleaned from other people. It is also worth noting that as much detail as a possible was given about respondents, while maintaining their anonymity. The third limitation of the study is that it was largely confined to the implementation of public policy in Scotland and specifically further education policy. With the one notable exception of the PFI, the study did not take on a UK-wide policy perspective or an education-wide perspective. That said there appear to be no fundamental reasons to believe that the findings relate only to the specificities of further education policy in Scotland. As shown in the literature and confirmed by this study, there has been a spread of networks in government. There are also other areas of public policy, such as health, law and order and agriculture, where there is interdependence across policy areas. I respectfully propose that for those reasons, my findings generalise to public policy implementation theory, policy network theory and other areas of public policy where there is interdependence. Moreover, as the West Lothian College case study has been a case of those theoretical ideas and a unique phenomenon, I believe I have shown that analytical generalisation from the case is plausible.

REFLECTION ON METHODS

The Non-respondent

As highlighted in the Methods of Data Analysis Chapter, one elite respondent, who had enthusiastically agreed to participate in my research, failed to respond to any further contact despite my persistent attempts to arrange the interview. The non-respondent was a highly important public figure, who had been pivotal in the entire events of the West Lothian College case from conception to contract signature and would likely have been a rich source of data. It would have been of value to know if the non-respondent's view differed in any way to that of those who did respond and also the data harvested from official documents. That events played out as they did, says something about the characteristics, attitudes and traits of elites, power play and the public policy process itself, in that an organisational elite can choose to absent themselves from the public gaze.

Recursive Characteristic of Data Analysis Process

The approach I employed in relation to the process of analysing my data was informed by the work of Seidel (1998). I felt that it reflected and complemented my research design of case study, as both are recursively inductive and deductive. For Yin (1994), case study methodology is both inductive and deductive and being theory-driven, case study begins inductively with a theoretical proposition, such as policy networks. It also allows the research to induce situations (Yin 1994) where policy networks might be found and what these might look like. However, once the methodology is applied, the richness of the data enables the researcher to deduce back to generalised principles (Yin 1994). The outcome of this is a cyclical dialogue between the inductive and the deductive that directly addresses, validates and improves the theoretical proposition (Yin 1994). Seidel (1998) is quite clear that

when ‘Noticing, collecting and thinking’ (Seidel 1998, p. 1) about the data, it is not a straightforward, linear process but one that is characterised (Seidel 1998, p. 2) by being:

- Iterative and progressive.
- Recursive.
- Holographic.

(Adapted from Seidel 1998, p. 2)

As already highlighted in the Research Methodology Chapter, my process was holographic in that the different parts of the process i.e. noticing, collecting and thinking**,** contained all the information possessed by the whole process, enabling me to envision a 3-D image of the data and emergent concepts that brought both depth and clarity to the process (Seidel 1998). By going through that rigorous process each time I handled the data, I got to know it more thoroughly and developed a relationship with it that eventually took me to the point where I could confidently engage with and understand it. Up to that point I had been a mere bystander who had gazed at the data and been intimidated by it. Within that overall process, the recursive sub-routine I employed while analysing the data played an important part in the explanation-building and emergent concept testing phases of my research. While busy collecting points of interest from the data, I would often simultaneously start noticing new points of interest to collect. This sub-routine was repeated over and over again as one point of interest in the data called me back to a previous point of interest. One specific example of this back and forth process was when I looked at how West Lothian College itself had responded to the funding situation. Initially, it seemed that the data were only pointing to the generation of income. However, as I looked more closely at the data, I noticed other points of interest that went beyond the financial and took me

to the people and the culture of the organisation. The results of applying the above process in that particular context, ultimately led to the 'Organisational Response' section of the Findings Chapter.

Literature Gap

My research identified two gaps in the literature. The first is a gap in the literature concerning a policy network analysis approach to policy implementation in further education in Scotland. While the studies of Marker (1994), Raab (1992) and some research into local post-16 sector governance networks in England were found. I had expected to find many more studies; especially at a UK level. Given the extensive number of empirical studies of education in the UK, I found that surprising.

My research identified that a gap exists in the literature regarding the topic of how to show the workings of qualitative research. Given the extent of the discourse on qualitative research and the importance of this topic in relation to the accountability of qualitative research, I found there to be a paucity of in-depth writing about showing how it is done, which in itself was surprising to me. However, my EdD Supervisor subsequently confirmed my assertion that there was such a gap. While my literature search had included amongst others Patton (1990), Mays and Pope (2000), Locke, Silverman and Spirduso (2004), Silverman (2005) and Wolcott (2009), these had proved unproductive. After considerable persistence, I identified the work of Holliday (2001). This proved to be a valuable source, which I hope will be added to the recommended reading list for subsequent EdD students.

Showing My Workings

I used Holliday's (2001) work to inform how I should show the workings of my own research. In showing the workings of how I constructed the 'reality' of my research, the evidence was not confined to just one part of my thesis (Holliday 2001, p. 47). Instead, it is to be found throughout the structure of my research. To begin with, the Abstract gave the essential message of the study through a statement of the topic and research question. In the Introduction Chapter, the research topic, main research question and sub research questions were set out, along with why the research was important, the issues that it raised and how the research fitted with other work. The remainder of the chapter contained a brief introduction to the setting and overall data collection strategy and concluded with how the study was structured. The Context Chapter set the scene of the study and contextualised the research. In the Literature Review Chapter, the conceptual framework was set out, allowing me to place myself as the researcher in relation to the research. In the Research Methodology Chapter, the rigour of my research process was established by showing my workings in relation to:

- A description of the setting for my research.
- A catalogue of the research activities I had carried out and the data I had collected.
- Justification of my research strategy.
- My dialogue with the research setting and how my research had responded to the social setting in which it took place.
- The structure of my data analysis e.g. origin of themes and headings.
- My system for re-presenting data (coding, referencing, anonymising).

By making the separation of data, discursive commentary and argument apparent in the text, I sought to make it transparent to the reader where and what I had described or recorded during the data collection phase and what I had then made of the data. Such clarity strengthened the validity of my research and revealed how my subjectivity had been managed. My workings showed how I had maintained rigour in the research process by making it clear who I was, what I did and how responsive what I did had been in relation to the demands of the actual research setting. Lastly, in the Findings Chapter, the workings showed what the study did and how my entire research achieved what it did.

Indigenous Insider & Researcher

My positionality as researcher in this study was that of an 'indigenous insider' (Banks 1998, p. 8) as I was in the privileged position of being close to and socialised in the relevant networks through my professional lived experience and could speak with authority about them (Banks 1998, p. 8). I also had a shared identity with the study's elite respondents and a shared experience of the West Lothian College case. My closeness to and familiarity with a mainly closed network and the selected organisational and political elites was a position of considerable strength. Closeness provided me with a methodological advantage (Banks 1998), in that positionally, I had equality with the respondents and was well placed to observe and interpret situations and events. In contrast, an outsider researcher would not have had such advantage. It was with the benefit of such insights that I formulated, developed and implemented a robust research design, in which the voices of participants were paramount. The above should not be interpreted as suggesting that this research endeavour was easily accomplished. It is simply to recognise the advantage I had. It also has to be to be acknowledged that it is simply not tenable for an insider

researcher such as myself to claim that I had approached the research free of any pre-conceived ideas. As a reflexive practitioner I recognised that while I was advantaged by closeness, it was also a potential weakness in that it can lead to questionable practices in the use, selection, manipulation and interpretation of data (Malcolm 1993). To counter that possibility, I adopted a dialectal perspective to resolve the challenges of looking both inside and out. This helped me "get out of my own head" and critically reflect on the research process and my interactions (Aguilar 1981). It was in these ways that I sought to achieve simultaneously the necessary involvement and detachment in my research endeavours. The public evidence of whether I managed this is shown in this thesis and is for others to judge.

While researching in my own workplace and other settings that I was familiar with gave me an advantage, I also recognised that closeness was also a danger in seeking to maintain a detached stance. Given my role as a senior manager at my place of work, I came to this research with my own values and beliefs and recognise that these may impinge on my research, be difficult to separate out from research and interview questions and my interpretation of the data (Appleby 2013, p. 13). It may also be challenging to remain completely objective when interpreting the data (Appleby 2013, p. 13). Given that backcloth, I needed to establish a critical distance, so that I could remain detached and objective in the research process. In doing so, I knew that whatever the stage the research process was at, I had to maintain a critical eye and question what had happened and why in order to develop more sophisticated explanatory insights to the case. Guided by the literature, I adopted reflexivity as a way of addressing these challenges.

As has been acknowledged in the Research Methodology Chapter, the role of the researcher in qualitative research is critical. As a researcher, I, like other people, had my own value-systems and beliefs that had been informed and influenced by the social-scientific inquiry framework, methods and previous academic research that I had been exposed to. I had appropriate experience as a member of a cohort undertaking a part-time professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) that drew upon my extensive professional experience and intimate involvement with the case. I had engaged with 'proper' (Armstrong 1994) academic research through the 'apprenticeship' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 29) model of teaching and learning and in the practice (Lave 1997) of education. Through that form of engagement, I learned from 'experts' in the form of professional academics, discussions with my EdD Supervisor, the experiences of other individuals in the cohort, from professional colleagues and other researchers. My learning was 'situated' (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 41) through taught elements delivered by professional academics, directed reading of current research relevant to my chosen area of study, tutorials, my own practice, presenting my research proposal to an academic panel and a supervised research thesis. Such a process further developed my own understanding of and knowledge in the fields of public policy and education. My engagement with a professional Doctorate in Education programme encouraged me to critically reflect upon previously held blinkered insights and removed me from the ways in which my knowledge had become situated socially as a result of context, cultural and institutional experiences (Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989). A further strength was that by undertaking a part-time Doctorate programme, I was able to relate my learning to my on-going professional lived experience. All of that combined to help my mind become more finely attuned to doing this research, refined my capacity to think

carefully, helped me make more insightful judgements and put me in a good position to do this research.

Concluding Remarks

In concluding this research in to the West Lothian College case and its financial difficulties, I am reminded of the comment "Events dear boy, events." attributed to the late, former, UK Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, in answer to a journalist's question about what can most easily steer a government off course (Pinker 2003). As this research has shown, the local issue of a college's attempts to secure a fit-for-purpose estate for its learners were steered off course by unforeseen events. However, I take heart, that in the context of this study and the unforeseen events that unfolded, it appears that many of the professionals intimately involved in the West Lothian College case did what professionals do best. They got on with it! This was particularly so in respect of those professionals from the West Lothian College. It would have been so very easy for those professionals closely involved in the case to have simply given up, put the funding difficulties in the "too hard" tray and let events take their course. Had that been the case, West Lothian College would simply have run out of money around 2011 and defaulted on the PFI contract. Such events might even have threatened the continued existence of the institution. However, that was not the case. Not only did the professionals of West Lothian College deliver on the day-to-day things that mattered most to the learners and communities of West Lothian, at the same time they doggedly sought to overcome and resolve the challenges, obstacles, negativity and reputational damage outlined in this research. The tenacity shown by these professionals was in spite of these many seemingly un-surmountable obstacles. Not all of this could be attributed to an interdependency of public policy and the intersections, interplay and inter-linkages between them. A

"could not care less" attitude, arrogance and ignorance, initially, on the part of some key actors, were more than evident. The paucity, in some quarters, of accepting and taking responsibility for events was highly disconcerting to the college's board of governors, other college senior management colleagues and MSPs. Alongside all of that, a more widespread and damaging cynicism was frequently trailed in public by the press. All had to be countered and overcome. As one of those West Lothian College professionals, I fear that, unless cognisance is taken of the issues raised in this modest and small-scale research, then we will, paraphrasing the words of Rhodes (2003), see the sour laws of unintended consequences prevail in the arena of public policy-making and public policy implementation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LITERATURE SEARCH

APPENDIX 1: LITERATURE SEARCH

The following describes how the literature search was undertaken. The review took place between February 2005 and October 2010.

Literature Review Scope

In investigating the literature to address the research question and sub-questions, the scope of the review was drawn to include the following themes and sub-themes:

Government & Governance:

- Differentiated Polity Model
- Managerialism & Marketisation
- Multi-Level Governance
- New Public Management
- Westminster Model

Institutions:

- Institutional Theory
- New Institutionalism
- Historical Institutionalism

Policy:

- Change
- Cycle
- Implementation
- Learning
- Public
- Mess
- Networks
- Outcomes

Politics:

- Sour Laws
- Unintended Consequences

Power:

- Power-Dependence.

Literature Search Strategy

The thematic literature search drew upon a wide yet relevant range of scholarly work that included the seminal and contemporary. The search strategy was initially

informed by reading the recommended texts from the 'Public Policy' strand of the EdD programme. This provided useful signposts to guide a wider search of the literature and to inform what not to include. The literature was then sifted for respected discourse and relevant theory guided by the scope of the literature search. The search strategy was an iterative process in which literature was added or discarded and the scope of the review refined as a result. Further refinement of the search strategy arose through discussions of the literature search with my thesis Supervisor.

Literature Types

A total of 319 separate pieces of literature were reviewed comprising scholarly texts, scholarly journals and official documents.

Examples of scholarly texts are:

Anderson, JE 1975, *Public policy-making*, Praeger, New York.

Lukes, S 1974, *Power: a radical view*, 1st edn, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Lukes, S 2005, *Power: a radical view*, 2nd edn, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Marks, G 1992, 'Structural policy in the European Community', in *Euro politics: institutions and policy-making in the 'new' European Union*, ed A Sbragia, Brookings Institute, Washington.

Marsh, D 1998, 'The development of the policy network approach', in *Comparing policy networks*, ed D Marsh, Open University Press, Buckingham.

Marsh, D & Rhodes, RAW 1992, *Policy Networks in British Government*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.

Marshall, C & Rossman G 1989, *Designing qualitative research*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Massey, A 2001, 'Government in the age of governance', Inaugural Lecture, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth.

Mayntz, R 2003, 'New Challenges to governance theory', in *Governance as social and political communication*, ed HP Bang, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Examples of scholarly journals are:

Arregui, J, Stokman, F & Thomson, R 2004. 'Bargaining in the European Union and Shifts in Actors' Policy Positions', *European Union Politics*, vol. 5, pp. 47-72.

Aucoin, P 1990, 'Administrative reform in public management: paradigms, principles, paradoxes and pendulums', *Governance*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 115-137.

Atkinson, MM & Coleman, WD 1989, 'Strong states and weak states: sectoral policy networks in advanced capitalist economies', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 19, pp. 47-67.

Examples of official documents are:

Scottish Funding Council 2006, *PFI/ PPP and Capital Procurement in the Scottish Further and Higher Education Sectors*, viewed 19 August 2007, www.sfc.ac.uk/information/information_funding/PFI_PPP%20_Capital_Procurement%20_SFC_Nov06.pdf

Scottish Parliament 1999, *Further Education Funding in Scotland*, Research Note 99/23, viewed 13 December 2005 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/ research/pdf_res_notes/rn99-23.pdf

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Scottish Parliament 2005b, *Audit Committee Official Report*, viewed 13 December 2005 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/audit/or-05/au05-1202.htm

Scottish Parliament 2005c, *Audit Committee 7th Report, 2005: Further Education Colleges, SP Paper 436 AU/S2/05/R7*, viewed 13 December 2005 http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/ committees/audit/reports-05/aur05-07.htm

Literature Sources

The sources of the literature used in the review were:

- University of Edinburgh Library
- University of Edinburgh Research Support Office resources
- On-line journals accessed through 'Athens'
- Inter-library loans
- Internet e.g. Google Scholar, Questia
- My own knowledge and collection of texts, articles and reports from other strands of the EdD programme.

The individual literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

Literature Search Criteria

The search criteria employed to identify and organise relevant sources were:

- Names of author(s),
- Key word searches e.g. public policy, policy implementation, policy, policy implementation in education/further education, networks, governance
- Journals by topic e.g. politics, policy studies, public administration

The search criteria was informed and developed by exploring these concepts while researching and writing the public policy assignment for the EdD.

APPENDIX 2: CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

APPENDIX 2

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Overview

To conduct research in to the unintended consequences of public policy implementation using the particular example of West Lothian College's PFI-procured Livingston campus as a case study.

The reasons for wanting to do this research are:

- To explain and understand how the particular unintended consequence came about and why.
- To explain the effect of the unintended consequence.
- To examine what policy learning has emerged as a result
- To examine what policy changes(s) have arisen as a result.

Kind of Research Questions

The outline research question to be addressed is:

How and why did the interplay of seemingly unrelated public policies result in an unintended consequence in the case of West Lothian College?

The outline sub questions to be addressed are:

- What were the intended policy goals?
- How and why did the implementation of one policy impact upon the implementation of another?
- What was the process by which this came about?
- What part did changes in organising perspective, policy networks and actors play in the process?
- What was the effect of this unintended consequence for the different actors?
- What policy learning and change arose as a result?

Aim

The aim is to present an informed analysis of how a significant sector-wide aspect of Scottish further education funding policy impacted on one actor and also add to the base of knowledge in the area of public policy implementation.

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL (Continued)

Access & Sources of Information

Access will be sought from the following fifteen participants to obtain an insider's/outsider's account:

Category of Participant
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Former Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Former Senior College Sector Member
Former Senior Scottish Executive Cabinet Member
Former Senior Scottish Executive Civil Servant
Former Senior Scottish Office Cabinet Member
Senior Scottish Executive Civil Servant
Senior College Manager
Senior College Manager
Senior Scottish Funding Council Manager
Senior Scottish Funding Council Manager
Private Sector Partner Senior Manager
Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member
Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member

Qualitative Research Study

A qualitative research study will be undertaken. This has been informed by the nature of the research question(s), the need to explore the topic and present a detailed view of it, as well as recognition of my own involvement in the subject of the case study.

Methodology

The tradition of inquiry to be followed is a case study approach and specifically the single bounded system of West Lothian College. The case study approach has been chosen as it offers the opportunity to develop an in-depth analysis of the case cited.

Type of Research Methods

The type of research methods anticipated include:

- Desk Research (review of existing research, official reports and academic journal articles)
- Semi-structured Interviews (individual).

Specific Interview Questions

1. What are your views of the funding situation at West Lothian College?

2. To what extent were the problems caused by a mismatch between pre-1997/1999 policies (like PFI, Incorporation and funded student growth) and post-1999 policies?

3. What role in the emergence of the problems has been played by politicians, civil servants and funding council staff?

4. What role has the Scottish Parliament (including its committees) played in the situation?

5. Are there any other points you would like to make?

Case Study Report Guide

- Abstract
- Introduction & Research Questions
- Context
- Literature Review
- Methods of Data Analysis
- Principal Findings
- Conclusions & Discussion
- Bibliographical Information
- Appendices

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Appendix 3

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Dear xxxx

I am undertaking Doctoral level research in the area of Public Policy Implementation and would very much appreciate your input to my research. A brief overview of my research is attached for your consideration. If agreeable, your input would be by way of a structured interview of around 1.5 hours at a mutually convenient date and time during the second half of 2006. A copy of the interview questions would be provided in advance and these will be derived from the outline research question and sub questions contained in the overview. I do hope you will be able to give my request your fullest consideration and look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Kindest regards

David

David W Murray

Assistant Principal

West Lothian College

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Continued)

Overview

General Area of Research

To conduct research in to the unintended consequences of public policy implementation using the particular example of West Lothian College's PFI-procured Livingston campus as a case study.

The reasons for wanting to do this research are:

- To explain and understand how the particular unintended consequence came about and why.
- To explain the effect of the unintended consequence.
- To examine what policy learning has emerged as a result
- To examine what policy changes(s) have arisen as a result.

Research Questions

The outline research question to be addressed is:

How and why did the interplay of seemingly unrelated public policies result in an unintended consequence in the case of West Lothian College?

The outline sub questions to be addressed are:

- What were the intended policy goals?
- How and why did the implementation of one policy impact upon the implementation of another?
- What was the process by which this came about?
- What part did changes in organising perspective, policy networks and actors play in the process?
- What was the effect of this unintended consequence for the different actors?
- What policy learning and change arose as a result?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Continued)

Aim

The aim is to present an informed analysis of how a significant sector-wide aspect of Scottish further education funding policy impacted on one actor and also add to the base of knowledge in the area of public policy implementation.

Access & Sources of Information

Access will be sought from the following participants to obtain an insider's/outsider's account:

Category of Participant
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Former Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College
Former Senior College Sector Member
Former Senior Scottish Executive Cabinet Member
Former Senior Scottish Executive Civil Servant
Former Senior Scottish Office Cabinet Member
Senior Scottish Executive Civil Servant
Senior College Manager
Senior College Manager
Senior Scottish Funding Council Manager
Senior Scottish Funding Council Manager
Private Sector Partner Senior Manager
Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member
Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member

Qualitative Research Study

A qualitative research study will be undertaken. This has been informed by the nature of the research question(s), the need to explore the topic and present a detailed view of it, as well as recognition of my own involvement in the subject of the case study.

Methodology

The tradition of inquiry to be followed is a case study approach and specifically the single bounded system of West Lothian College. The case study approach has been chosen as it offers the opportunity to develop an in-depth analysis of the case cited.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Continued)

Type of Research Methods

The type of research methods anticipated include:

- Desk Research (review of existing research, official reports and academic journal articles)
- Structured Interviews (individual).

Interview Questions

Dear xxxx

Please find attached the interview questions as promised. As well as taking my own brief notes, would you be in agreement to me recording the interview?

Regards

David

David Murray

Assistant Principal, Policy & Planning

01506 427804

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (Continued)

Specific Interview Questions

1. What are your views of the funding situation at West Lothian College?

2. To what extent were the problems caused by a mismatch between pre-1997/1999 policies (like PFI, Incorporation and funded student growth) and post-1999 policies?

3. What role in the emergence of the problems has been played by politicians, civil servants and funding council staff?

4. What role has the Scottish Parliament (including its committees) played in the situation?

5. Are there any other points you would like to make?

Background

To conduct research in to the unintended consequences of public policy implementation using the particular example of West Lothian College's PFI-procured Livingston campus as a case study.

The outline research question to be addressed is:

- How and why did the interplay of seemingly unrelated public policies result in an unintended consequence in the case of West Lothian College?

The outline sub questions to be addressed are:

- What were the intended policy goals?
- How and why did the implementation of one policy impact upon the implementation of another?
- What was the process by which this came about?
- What part did changes in organising perspective, policy networks and actors play in the process?
- What was the effect of this unintended consequence for the different actors?
- What policy learning and change arose as a result?

APPENDIX 4: CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS & CODE

APPENDIX 4

CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS & CODE

The table below shows the categories of policy network membership ascribed to the participants and the codes attributed to them to protect anonymity.

Category	**Respondent Code**
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College	A
Board of Governors Member, West Lothian College	B
Former Board of Management Member, West Lothian College	C
Former Senior Executive College Sector Body Member	D
Former Scottish Executive Senior Cabinet Member	E
Former Scottish Executive Senior Civil Servant	F
Former Senior Scottish Office Minister	G
Scottish Executive Senior Civil Servant	H*
West Lothian College Senior Manager	I
West Lothian College Senior Manager	J
Scottish Funding Council Senior Executive	K
Scottish Funding Council Senior Executive	L
Private Sector Partner Senior Manager	M
MSP & Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member	N
MSP & Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Member	O

* Respondent had initially agreed to participate but subsequently refused to answer any attempts to contact them. The removal of this respondent from the study was fully discussed and subsequently agreed with my EdD Supervisor.

APPENDIX 5: KEY WORDS & RECURRING THEMES

Appendix 5

Key Words & Recurring Themes

The following are the 283 key words and recurring themes identified from the interviews with respondents and the analysis of official documents:

1. Abandon
2. Actors
3. Activity levels
4. Accessible
5. Agreed settlement
6. Agreed assumptions
7. Association of Scottish Colleges (ASC)
8. Assurances
9. Auditor General for Scotland
10. Auditor's Report
11. Audit Scotland
12. Availability Charge
13. Balance sheet
14. Bathgate Campus
15. Bend them
16. Benefits
17. Board of Management (Governors)
18. Buy-out
19. Cap on student numbers
20. Capital funding
21. Catalyst
22. Cautious
23. Change
24. Circumstance(s)
25. Civil servants
26. Closer to the people
27. Coalition
28. Collaboration and consolidation
29. College
30. Colleges
31. College institution
32. College problem
33. College responses
34. College responsibility
35. Committee
36. Committed
37. Competitiveness and growth
38. Conservatives (Tory)
39. Consequences
40. Context
41. Cost

42. Criticise(s)
43. Criticism
44. Decision
45. Department
46. Detrimental
47. Devolution
48. Difficult (ies)
49. Ditched
50. Don’t relate
51. Early PFI
52. Economic development
53. Education college
54. Education provision
55. Education and training
56. Educational institution
57. Embarrassing headlines
58. Evidence
59. Facilities Management
60. Failing colleges
61. Figures
62. Finance
63. Financial case
64. Financial difficulties
65. Financial impact
66. Financial implications
67. Financial issue
68. Financial people
69. Financial security
70. Financial support
71. Flag ship policy
72. Flexibility
73. Framework
74. Future settlement
75. Funding Council staff
76. Funding gap
77. Funding deficit
78. Funding element
79. Funding situation
80. Funding support
81. Funded student growth
82. Further Education
83. Further Education colleges
84. Further Education policy
85. Government
86. Government balance sheet
87. Government funding
88. Government funding post-‘97
89. Growth
90. Growth model
91. Handed down

92. Her Majesty's Government
93. Hindsight
94. Individuals
95. Impact
96. Implications
97. Income generation
98. Incorporation
99. Information
100. Infrastructure
101. Inherited
102. Intended policy goals
103. Interdependence
104. Institutions
105. Issue
106. Key actors
107. Knowledge
108. Knock-on effect
109. Labour governments
110. Labour (Party)
111. Learn
112. Legislation
113. Legislative body
114. Locals
115. Local impact
116. Localised issues
117. Logical arguments
118. Lease
119. Lesson
120. Lessons learned
121. Livingston campus
122. Macro-economic level
123. Local needs
124. Manage
125. Management
126. Management team
127. Ministers
128. Ministerial decision
129. Ministerial level
130. Mismanagement
131. Mistake(s)
132. Model
133. More debate
134. More transparent
135. MPs
136. MSPs
137. Naïve
138. New college
139. Never intended to relate
140. New infrastructure
141. No compromise

142. No surrender issue
143. Nobody's interested
144. Non-political civil service
145. Not working
146. Objective(s)
147. Officials
148. Off the balance sheet
149. Only course of action
150. Openness
151. Options
152. Opportunity (ies)
153. Organising perspective
154. Overpowering
155. Overwhelmingly
156. Parliamentarians
157. Parliamentary committees
158. Parliamentary
159. Partnership
160. Perspective
161. PFI contract
162. PFI/PPP
163. PFI test
164. Pitfalls
165. Policy (ies)
166. Policy agencies
167. Policy change
168. Policy consequence(s)
169. Policy decisions
170. Policy development
171. Policy dimension
172. Policy impact
173. Policy implementation
174. Policy implications
175. Policy institutions
176. Policy learning
177. Policy making
178. Policy mess
179. Policy mismatch
180. Policy network
181. Policy review
182. Political
183. Political atmosphere
184. Political decision
185. Political impetus
186. Political issue
187. Political pressure
188. Political questions
189. Politicians
190. Positions
191. Post-'97

192. Post-1999 policies
193. Post-devolution policies
194. Power
195. Powerful
196. Pre-1997 policies
197. Pre-1999 policies
198. Pre-devolution policies
199. Predicated on growth
200. Press
201. Pressure
202. Principal
203. Process
204. Problem(s)
205. Problem college
206. Protective
207. Public expenditure
208. Public investment
209. Public purse
210. Public Private Partnership (PPP)
211. Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
212. Private capital
213. Private cash
214. Private financiers
215. Private provider
216. Private sector
217. QUANGO
218. Real negative
219. Reassessment
220. Reassurances
221. Recognition
222. Relocation
223. Reneged
224. Renegotiation
225. Resolution
226. Resources
227. Responsible
228. Responsibility
229. Retrospective committee
230. Review
231. Risk
232. Role
233. Scrap (the PFI)
234. Scottish Executive
235. Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC)
236. Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
237. Scottish issues
238. Scottish Office
239. Scottish Parliament
240. Scottish Parliament Audit Committee (SPAC)
241. Scottish Parliament Audit Committee Report

242. Scotland
243. Section 22 Report(s)
244. Sector
245. Sectoral
246. Sectoral level policy change
247. Sector-wide impact
248. Shape them
249. Skills
250. Sound financial footing
251. Special case
252. Spending plans for ‘99
253. Spending plans
254. Spending plans unchanged
255. Strategic (ally)
256. Strategic decision
257. Straightjacket (of PFI)
258. Student activity
259. Students
260. Student numbers
261. Student Units of Measurement (SUMs)
262. Suffer
263. Tablets of stone
264. Technical issues
265. Technicalities
266. The public interest
267. Tory
268. Tory spending plans 1997-99
269. Transparent
270. Travesty
271. Treasury
272. Unbending
273. Unintended consequence
274. Unique
275. Unravel
276. Unsatisfactory
277. Value-for-money
278. West Lothian College
279. West Lothian
280. Westminster committees
281. Westminster Parliament
282. Westminster-based policy
283. Who cares?

APPENDIX 6: OPEN CODING CATEGORIES

APPENDIX 6

OPEN CODING CATEGORIES

The following are the 15 open, inductive coding categories that emerged from the data:

1. Activity Levels
2. Actors
3. Context
4. Funding Situation
5. Funded Student Growth
6. Government
7. Organising Perspective
8. Options
9. Political
10. Policy
11. Power
12. Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
13. Sector
14. Unintended Consequences
15. West Lothian College

APPENDIX 7: AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES

APPENDIX 7

AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES

The following are the 5 higher-level conceptual axial coding categories into which the 15 open codes were grouped:

1. Context
2. Organising Perspective
3. Policy
4. Power
5. Resources.

APPENDIX 8: SELECTIVE CODING CATEGORIES

Appendix 8

Selective Coding Categories

Taxonomy of Macro Level Dimensions of Policy Network Interaction

The following is the taxonomy of macro-level dimensions of policy network interaction that the 5 higher-level conceptual categories were allocated to:

1. Interdependence
2. Interests
3. Membership
4. Resources.

APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW KEY WORDS ANALYSIS

Appendix 9

Responses to interview questions analysed for key words & recurring themes.

Respondent E: Former Senior Scottish Executive Cabinet Member

Q1 What are your views of the funding situation at West Lothian College?

A lot of the implications of government funding are not just unique to West Lothian.

The great issue around post-1997 Labour governments were that we inherited PFIs/PFI concept from the Conservatives. We've subsequently moved to Public, Private Partnerships (PPPs) and they're not right either.

I think the core issue is that there will be a lot of unintended consequences for institutions because the key issue is to change the balance sheet of government at macro-economic level.

I'm not sure that when these issues were devised under the Conservatives or under Labour, too much thought was given to the consequences for institutions, because that was not the main objective.

The main objective was to boost public investment but in a new way and I think the new way didn't really factor in localised issues, especially for an education college.

The other thing for West Lothian College is it moved. It got a new college and as happened with many that I've experienced in government, things quite quickly unravel and so therefore you find that there's no way that you manipulate change or adapt to satisfy both the requirements of national government and the requirements of a college institution.

So therefore you're faced, and this is the problem, the most difficult for government, the most embarrassing situation of having to abandon, change, scrap, whatever you will in relation to the PFI. And that's why I think the key actors, currently in the Scottish Executive, don't have a difficulty with the logical arguments and the benefits that would flow to the college, but they've got to safeguard themselves against embarrassing headlines. Another ditched PFI, it's not working and understandably I think they have been cautious in relation to that.

The core issue is to give private financiers a return, get the balance sheet of Her Majesty's Government, whether in Edinburgh or London changed and so therefore it does present huge problems.

The scrapping of the PFI would seem, the most, not the most logical, but just the only course of action.

Q2 To what extent were the problems caused by a mismatch between pre-1997/1999 policies (like PFI, Incorporation and funded student growth) and post-1999 policies?

I don't think PFI deals are necessarily empathetic to detailed organisational institutional issues.

If you then have a situation where you have a prescribed financial deal for a long number of years and then your key funding element**,** or one of your key funding elements, grow the students**,** is capped or upset, then in my judgement you're merely making a bad situation just much, much worse.

The PFI was never designed for educational institutions based on a thorough understanding of how the Funding Councils work.

You cannot break the straightjacket of PFI**.**

In political terms, if you're working at the UK level or even at a Scottish level, what happens in West Lothian or in the Isle of Skye, or whatever, is a million miles away from you until the locals start to scratch the surface, start to complain and you've got a political issue on your hands.

I just don't think finance and policy consequences of what happens are too important in the minds of financial people, civil servants or, to be fair to ministers, at ministerial level.

The construction of PFI is a fixed deal and the only people that will suffer will be institutions. The PFI is constructed on the basis that if you get your student numbers

or not, who cares? Because it's off the balance sheet and the host gets the money, you have the problems. And so therefore you've got policy dimensions here that don't relate but were never intended to relate.

A lot people would look at this and say this is crazy, there should have been some flexibility in the sense that the figures are not achieved, then that can't be done. But on the PFI front nobody's interested in that.

PFI is a financial issue it's not an educational one.

To me it's not unintended consequences**,** nobody's interested anyway**.**

To me it's a complete mismatch that could have been foreseen, but the problem is that nobody cared enough.

If the college had not reneged against the whole concept, you'd have been paying and paying with no more student numbers.

You have in a way for the first time with PFI/PPP a system of policy-making on finance, which need not bear any relationship to existing policy agencies, policy institutions or policy guidelines.

We talk about unintended consequences, but there's mismatches built into the system.

Q3 What role in the emergence of the problems has been played by politicians, civil servants and funding council staff?

PFI was all powerful, led by the Treasury, led by the civil servants, who can be unbending.

In terms of this interplay of the people you've identified, this was an overpowering, overwhelmingly, civil servant, Treasury issue. Initially it was no compromise, a no surrender issue, it was this is it and you had to shape them, bend them round the institutional world that you're doing. An in that sense, in my judgement, politicians at Westminster and on Treasury and politicians in Scotland had very, very little influence at all on any policy-making around PFI and any policy consequences or implications from that.

Civil servants don't like to get messed around. If you've got a PFI, it may be horrible in its consequences, but if it's straightforward and logical, works and Treasury are telling you that then they're comfortable with that.

Within Edinburgh for example, I think politicians have been very uncomfortable with a Westminster-based policy first of all. Secondly a Conservative Westminster-based policy and thirdly, in terms of the organisation of debt and borrowing between departments in London, no control. The borrowing requirement's approved by London. The Parliament can't borrow, it borrows within their limits and so therefore the PFI was just handed down like a piece of stone and that's it.

The Funding Council staff it seems to me, in the West Lothian case, that their main role was to convince ministers that all of this could be done with no extra cost being

sought from the Executive to the Funding Council to achieve that. So therefore that's a pretty positive thing for them to be saying.

The psychology of politicians would be to look for all the negatives. A big negative would have been this is going to cost us to get out of it.

The acceptance of Tory spending plans for '97-'99 was a conscious decision made by the Chancellor and the Prime Minister, which surprised, shocked, annoyed a lot of people in the Labour Party, a lot of Labour MPs because they wanted changes immediately. But, Brown was smart enough to know that the coffers were not where he would like them to be and he wanted that to run and then it gives him time to put in place his spending plans for '99. So that was an overwhelming decision and there were no debts in that. And so therefore these were tough decisions because they were tough guidelines the Tories had set down.

And that's why from '99 to now you've had a purple patch in public expenditure, which will probably never be repeated, never be repeated full stop.

That then set the scene and it was an instant decision.

As soon as we came into government, Brown said 2 years we're looking like Tories. And from '99 it's completely changed the direction, the trajectory of public expenditure.

So that therefore meant things that were in the pipeline, things that weren't in the pipeline had to be constrained and contained within this overall framework. And so therefore the other thing that had to start then was to look at PFI, then they changed it to PPPs and all of this, but it was tinkering because the political issues that had been raised by PFI were not on the kind of complicated technical issues that we're talking about. It was about the staff get transferred, the conditions get transferred, you know they make loads of money, we're being fleeced.

So hugely political questions and civil servants love political questions because they're so easily dealt with. They just tell the minister that's political, we don't do politics.

You get that point where it all works in. So Gordon lays it down, spending plans unchanged, civil servants say to ministers, look this is the nature of the game. Quite frankly, that's how it works. Oversimplification, but the essential qualities are there

I'm actually praising the civil servants in a curious way because they are powerful.

The Treasury is all-powerful.

Q4 What role has the Scottish Parliament (including its committees) played in the situation?

You could argue that the parliamentarians, take the two that you've got in West Lothian, they had a role to play because they're a conduit for criticism, they get involved in issues, they can stir-up the political pot.

But the parliamentary committees, I'm not sure whether they have had any significant role. I think the members of them, they can highlight issues, they can criticise the Executive and they've done all of that. Their hands are really tied in a way because these tablets of stone that have been handed down through PFI/PPP are very difficult to change and part of the parliamentary frustration is that. So therefore you will get them having to mess around with the technicalities, with the kind of side issues that are involved. So I don't think the Parliament's done any worse or has it done any better than Westminster committees. It's just that PFI has become quite a taboo subject in the sense that no matter how much you shout your mouth off about it, the chances of change are very limited.

Supplementary Q. If under Westminster model would it have come on the radar?

I think it would have been dealt with in a different way. The Department would have dealt with it, the ministers at Westminster.

Everything's more transparent, which is one of the initial objectives of the Parliament. Closer to the people, more debate, more transparent. It doesn't mean at the end of the day you can change, but it does make more of an issue.

Supplementary Q. Transparency a double-edged sword?

The openness is a good thing.

The real negative on those issues is the Press, because the Press see every step back from a PFI scheme as a kick in the face for the Government and the Executive. Like the rather unhelpful stuff in the Herald recently.

They say this is an issue of public interest. Whose interest? But it's a mischievous issue. So therefore, Tom McCabe reads that and if you're an unbalanced minister, oh must be careful with this, must watch. Therefore they can undo much good work that's been done in the so-called interest of the public. I think its healthy all the rest of the debate, but certain newspapers may just want to use it as a weapon to attack the administration and that doesn't help the issue on the ground.

Supplementary Q. Auditor General & Auditor General's Report?

Could not use respondent's reply.

Q5 Are there any other points you would like to make?

Things can evolve here.

You need private capital in.

There is a thinking way forward that can keep private cash in but tackle some of the other issues which have emerged in a much more constructive way

One of the lessons that we can learn from this that we can't turn our back on private capital but the method by which we deploy it could be different.

One of the other lessons is that it's more appropriate for certain things than others.

APPENDIX 10: KEY WORDS & OPEN CODING CATEGORIES

Open Inductive Categories	Key Words & Themes
ACTIVITY LEVELS	1. Cap on student numbers 2. Funded student growth 3. Student activity 4. Student numbers 5. Student Units of Measurement (SUMs)
ACTORS	1. Association of Scottish Colleges 2. Auditor General for Scotland 3. Audit Scotland 4. Bend them 5. Board of Management (Governors) 6. Change 7. Civil servants 8. Colleges 9. Conservatives (Tory) 10. Department 11. Funding Council staff 12. Government 13. Individuals 14. Key actors 15. Labour (Labour Party) 16. Management 17. Management Team 18. Ministers 19. MPs 20. MSPs 21. Officials 22. Overpowering 23. Overwhelmingly 24. Parliamentarians 25. Parliamentary committees 26. Parliamentary **27.** Political questions 28. Politicians 29. Principal 30. Private provider 31. Private sector 32. Role 33. Scottish Executive 34. Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) 35. Scottish Funding Council (SFC) 36. Scottish Office 37. Scottish Parliament 38. Scottish Parliament Audit Committee

	39. Shape them 40. Students 41. Treasury 42. Unbending 43. West Lothian College 44. Who cares? 45. Westminster Parliament
CONTEXT	1. Audit Committee Report 2. Bathgate campus 3. Cap on student numbers 4. Change 5. Economic development 6. Education provision 7. Education and training 8. Funded student growth 9. Incorporation 10. Information 11. Livingston campus 12. Locals 13. Local impact 14. Localised issues 15. Local needs 16. New college 17. Relocation 18. Livingston campus 19. Relocation 20. Scotland 21. Scottish issues 22. Section 22 Report 23. Skills 24. West Lothian
FUNDING SITUATION	1. Change 2. Circumstances 3. Figures 4. Funding element 5. Funding gap 6. Funding deficit 7. Funding support 8. Unique
FUNDED GROWTH	1. Cap on student numbers 2. Change 3. Funding element 4. Student activity 5. Student numbers 6. Student Units of Measurement (SUMs) 7. Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUMs)

GOVERNMENT	1. Balance sheet 2. Change 3. Civil servants 4. Department 5. Funding element 6. Government balance sheet 7. Government funding post-'97 8. Her Majesty's Government 9. Labour governments 10. Macro-economic level 11. Ministerial decision 12. Ministerial level 13. Ministers 14. Non-political civil service 15. Off the balance sheet 16. Public expenditure 17. Public investment 18. Public purse 19. Power 20. Powerful 21. Scottish Executive 22. Spending plans 23. Spending plans for '99 24. Spending plans unchanged 25. Strategic 26. Tory spending plans 1997-99 27. Treasury 28. Unravel
ORGANISING PERSPECTIVE	1. Accessible 2. Auditor's Report 3. Catalyst 4. Change 5. Closer to the people 6. Coalition 7. Committee 8. Devolution 9. Evidence 10. Legislation 11. Legislative body 12. Locals 13. Localised issues 14. More debate 15. More transparent 16. Openness 17. Parliamentarians 18. Parliamentary committees 19. Parliamentary 20. Post-1999 policies 21. Post-devolution policies

	22. QUANGO 23. Retrospective committee 24. Scottish Executive 25. Scottish Further Education Funding Council (SFEFC) 26. Scottish Funding Council (SFC) 27. Scottish issues 28. Scottish Office 29. Scottish Parliament 30. Scottish Parliament Audit Committee 31. Section 22 Report 32. Technicalities 33. Transparent 34. Westminster-based policy 35. Westminster committees 36. Westminster Parliament
OPTIONS	1. Assurances 2. Buy-out 3. Change 4. Cost 5. Future settlement 6. Funding support 7. Ministerial decision 8. Objective(s) 9. Only course of action 10. Reassessment 11. Renegotiation 12. Renegotiating 13. Resolution 14. Resolution 15. Review 16. Scrap the PFI 17. Sound financial footing 18. Special case 19. Strategic decision 20. Value-for-money

POLITICAL	1. Change 2. Political atmosphere 3. Political decision 4. Political impetus 5. Political pressure 6. Politicians 7. Positions 8. Pressure
POLICY	1. Collaboration and consolidation 2. Competitiveness and growth 3. Detrimental 4. Don't relate 5. Flag ship policy 6. Funding element 7. Framework 8. Information 9. Knock-on effect 10. Local impact 11. Lease 12. Learn 13. Lesson 14. Lessons learned 15. Never intended to relate 16. Pitfalls 17. PFI/PPP 18. Policy agencies 19. Policy change 20. Policy consequence 21. Policy decisions 22. Policy development 23. Policy dimension 24. Policy impact 25. Policy implementation 26. Policy implications 27. Policy institutions 28. Policy learning 29. Policy making 30. Policy mess 31. Policy mismatch 32. Policy network 33. Policy review 34. Political 35. Political atmosphere 36. Political decision 37. Political impetus 38. Political pressure 39. Politicians 40. Positions 41. Post-1999 policies

	42. Post-devolution policies 43. Pre-1997 policies 44. Pre-1999 policies 45. Pre-Devolution policies 46. Process 47. Protective 48. Sectoral level policy change 49. Sector-wide impact 50. Strategic
POWER	1. Civil servants 2. Ministers 3. Overpowering 4. Overwhelmingly 5. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) 6. Powerful 7. Treasury
PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE	1. Abandon 2. Agreed assumptions 3. Agreed settlement 4. Availability Charge 5. Benefits 6. Buy-out 7. Cautious 8. Change 9. College problem 10. College responsibility 11. Committed 12. Consequences 13. Cost 14. Criticise 15. Criticism 16. Decision 17. Difficulties 18. Ditched 19. Early PFI 20. Embarrassing headlines 21. Facilities Management 22. Figures 23. Finance 24. Financial case 25. Financial difficulties 26. Financial impact 27. Financial implications 28. Financial issue 29. Financial people 30. Financial security 31. Financial support 32. Flag ship policy 33. Flexibility 34. Future settlement

	35. Funding element 36. Funding gap 37. Funding deficit 38. Funding situation 39. Funding support 40. Funded student growth 41. Growth 42. Growth model 43. Handed down 44. Hindsight 45. Impact 46. Implications 47. Information 48. Infrastructure 49. Inherited 50. Intended policy goals 51. Interdependence 52. Institutions 53. Issue 54. Knowledge 55. Knock-on effect 56. Lease 57. Logical arguments 58. Livingston campus 59. Mismanagement 60. Mistake(s) 61. Model 62. Naïve 63. New infrastructure 64. No compromise 65. No surrender issue 66. Nobody's interested 67. Not working 68. Partnership 69. Perspective 70. PFI contract 71. PFI/PPP 72. Pitfalls 73. Political issue 74. Predicated on growth 75. Press 76. Public expenditure 77. Public investment 78. Public purse 79. Public Private Partnership (PPP) 80. Private Finance Initiative (PFI) 81. Private capital 82. Private cash 83. Private financiers 84. Private provider

	85. Private sector 86. PFI test 87. Real negative 88. Reassessment 89. Reassurances 90. Recognition 91. Relocation 92. Reneged 93. Renegotiation(ing) 94. Resolution 95. Resources 96. Responsible 97. Responsibilities 98. Responsibility 99. Review 100. Risk 101. Scrap 102. Sound financial footing 103. Special case 104. Straightjacket (of PFI) 105. Strategic decision 106. Student activity 107. Student numbers 108. Student Units of Measurement (SUMs) 109. Tablets of stone 110. Technical issues 111. Technicalities 112. The public interest 113. Travesty 114. Treasury 115. Unintended consequence 116. Unique 117. Unsatisfactory 118. Value-for-money 119. Who cares?
SECTOR	1. Association of Scottish Colleges 2. Capital funding 3. Change 4. Collaboration and consolidation 5. Competitiveness and growth 6. Failing colleges 7. Financial difficulties 8. Financial security 9. Further Education 10. Further Education colleges 11. Further Education policy 12. Funded student growth 13. Incorporation 14. Sectoral

	15. Sectoral level policy change 16. Sector-wide impact
UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES	1. Consequences 2. Criticism 3. Detrimental 4. Difficulties 5. Financial difficulties 6. Financial impact 7. Financial implications 8. Impact 9. Implications 10. Knock-on effect 11. Local impact 12. Mistake(s) 13. Pitfalls 14. Policy consequence 15. Policy impact 16. Policy implementation 17. Policy implications 18. Policy making 19. Policy mess 20. Policy mismatch 21. Political pressure 22. Power 23. Problem(s) 24. Problem college 25. Reneged 26. Suffer 27. Travesty 28. Unsatisfactory
WEST LOTHIAN COLLEGE	1. Bathgate campus 2. Cap on student numbers 3. Change 4. College institution 5. College problem 6. College responsibility 7. College responses 8. Education college 9. Educational institution 10. Economic development 11. Education provision 12. Education and training 13. Funded student growth 14. Income generation 15. Incorporation 16. Individuals 17. Information 18. Livingston campus 19. Local impact 20. Local needs

	21. Livingston campus 22. Manage 23. Management 24. Management Team 25. Mismanagement 26. New college 27. Opportunities 28. Principal 29. Relocation 30. Skills 31. Suffer 32. Unique

APPENDIX 11: OPEN CODING TO AXIAL CODING

APPENDIX 11

OPEN CODING CATEGORIES ASCRIBED TO AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES

Axial Coding Categories	**Open Coding Categories**
Context	Actors Context Sector West Lothian College
Organising Perspective	Government Organising perspective
Policy	Policy Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Unintended consequences
Power	Options Political Power
Resources	Activity levels Financial Funding situation Funded student growth Resources

APPENDIX 12: AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES OF POLICY NETWORK INTERACTION ASCRIBED TO SELECTIVE CODING CATEGORIES OF POLICY NETWORK THEORY

APPENDIX 12

AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES OF POLICY NETWORK INTERACTION ASCRIBED TO SELECTIVE CODING CATEGORIES OF POLICY NETWORK THEORY.

Selective Coding Categories	**Axial Coding Categories**
Interdependence	Context Organising perspective Policy Power Resources
Interests	Context Organising perspective Policy Power Resources
Membership	Context Organising perspective Policy Power Resources
Resources	Context Organising perspective Policy Power Resources

Note:

An axial coding category can occur in more than one selective coding category.

APPENDIX 13: FIELD NOTE EXAMPLE

APPENDIX 13

FIELD NOTE EXAMPLE

Combined Interview with Respondents K&L

Arrived fifteen minutes ahead of the agreed interview time. Kept waiting in the public reception area for some ten minutes after the agreed starting time.

A secretary subsequently led me to the location for the interview, which was the private office of one of the respondents. The respondents were not present.

The respondents arrived together, exchanged pleasantries with me and offered an apology for the fact that I had been kept waiting. No explanation was offered as to why.

The interview commenced with me making sure that the participants were comfortable with the previously supplied research background, interview questions and approach. Both confirmed they were happy for the interview to be recorded.

It soon became very evident that a 'game plan' had been worked out in advance with one respondent taking the lead and the other contributing as and when they saw fit. The body language of the vocal member showed that the silent member was actually in control and exercising the power. Power play! Their responses had been well thought out in advance and were they very cautious and not overly expansive.

Frequent reference was made to the answers already being in the official documents and transcripts of the evidence session with Scottish Parliament Audit Committee.

The interview was interrupted by one participant part way through the agreed forty-five minute slot! They offered their apologies, but had just realised they had double booked. However, they could do another ten minutes. It was very evident that this was a power play again.

I managed to stretch the ten minutes to get through rest of the interview questions, as well as a few quick supplementaries.

I was asked if the respondents would get access to findings. I confirmed that this was my intention and that I saw that as a positive thing. It will be interesting to see what they make of my findings however.

I must discuss with my Supervisor how to deal with findings respondents don't like. As it's my research is it also my call?

Despite the very evident and not in the least subtle exercise of power by an elite, I managed to obtain some useful data beyond that already known from official documents and other respondents. There were also a few very valuable nuggets regarding findings and specifically in relation to lessons learned and future policy directions re the life cycling costs of capital assets.